

# THE NATURE AND ORIGINS OF THE POLITICAL VERSE

MICHAEL J. JEFFREYS

This paper was written in the Dumbarton Oaks Library during 1973–74. A dozen friends and colleagues who were working there at the time will find here the results of their suggestions and criticisms. I hope that they will not be disappointed. My special thanks are due, in various ways, to Dr. John Nesbitt, Professor Robert Browning, Professor Ihor Ševčenko, and to my patient wife.

I had completed this work before I realized that I was writing in the shadow of Henri Grégoire. In his review of S. Baud-Bovy, *La chanson populaire grecque du Dodécanèse*, in *Byzantion*, 12 (1973), 653–55, Grégoire made a brief suggestion which is repeated, with much more detail and closer argumentation, in the second half of this paper. I do not think that he ever returned to the question, and I hope that the following pages are an acceptable substitute for what would have been a more stimulating and wide-ranging discussion had he done so.

Further, W. Hörandner's monumental edition, *Theodore Prodromos, Historische Gedichte*, WByzSt, 11 (Vienna, 1974), was published too late to be incorporated here. Pages 128–33 provide a useful survey of the political verse, while 75–109 analyze its use in court ceremonials in greater detail than in pages 176–91 of my paper.

**T**HIS paper is offered as a contribution to the history of the national meter of modern Greece. It will fall into two approximately equal halves, the first of which will be a historical survey, starting around A.D. 1300 and running backward to the earliest remains of the meter at the beginning of the tenth century. The year 1300 has been chosen as a starting point on the assumption that by that date the political line was in general use for literature at both learned and vernacular levels, the latter being in some way reflected in the early Demotic works of the fourteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The reverse direction of progress is a necessary contrivance imposed by the nature of the material, which tends to be fuller and more explicit in the middle and at the end of the period to be covered. In the circumstances, the clearest and shortest course is to pass from the known to the unknown, from the later and more solid evidence to its earlier but dimmer foreshadowings.

The survey will be fairly thorough, but with no pretensions to completeness. It will concentrate on those writers and works which seem to reveal something of the reasons for the literary use of the political verse, beginning with the two Byzantine discussions of the meter, those of Planudes and Eustathios, followed by a detailed examination of John Tzetzes, who combined extensive use of the verse with numerous brief comments which reveal his motives. As it approaches the earliest surviving examples, the survey will become increasingly concerned with a search for origins, for a person who could have created the verse or a situation in which it could have arisen. In this connection, the historical portion of the paper will end with an examination of attempts made to find the political verse in works written before the tenth century. Two conclusions will be offered in the course of this survey. First, the political line was chosen by some of the most learned men in Byzantium, but only for those works in which they were seeking to put aside their learning and to make communication with the half-educated, often members of the imperial family. Second, there is no sign of a creator, and little distinct sign of a creative situation, from which the political verse could have derived.

The second part of this paper will continue the search for origins. By a careful reexamination of the material presented in the historical survey, two projections will be made about the hypothetical nature and function of the political verse during the period before its appearance in surviving literature. Following these leads, a possible origin will be suggested and examined. It is important to emphasize that this is no more than a suggestion, though it will be supported here by some detailed arguments. By the very nature of the evidence, certain solutions to this problem may never be obtained.

<sup>1</sup> This form of words has been chosen to avoid controversy over the nature and authorship of these early Demotic poems. See H.-G. Beck, "Die griechische Volksliteratur des 14. Jahrhunderts. Beiträge zu einer Standortsbestimmung," *XIV<sup>e</sup> Congrès International des Etudes Byzantines* (Bucharest, 1971), *Rapports*, I, 67–81.

The fullest discussion of the political line by a Byzantine writer coincides approximately in date with the beginning of our historical survey. Its author was Maximos Planudes, who must have written it between 1270 and 1305.<sup>2</sup> It consists of a dialogue on grammar with long speeches by a teacher, Palaitimos, interrupted briefly by his pupil Neophron. The last section deals with meter. Palaitimos first recommends hexameters and elegiacs, claiming that these are the best forms of poetic expression for his pupil. As usual with Byzantine metrical writers, he ignores the fact that the distinction between long and short syllables, on which these dactylic meters must be based, had disappeared in speech more than a millennium before.<sup>3</sup> But he goes on to make unusual admissions of the changes which had come about in the writing of poetry. He describes a process of decline by which, he says, ancient quantitative meters had developed into the new rhythm of the political verse, based on the stress-accents of the words.

Here is a fairly literal translation of Palaitimos' words, beginning from his transition from hexameters and elegiacs to lower forms of verse:

But some time ago—I do not know the reasons why men fell so low—that meter, suitable for heroic deeds and narrative, hallowed by a longer history than men can remember, was either neglected or could no longer be maintained. . . . They chose iambics instead of hexameters, and used the dichronic vowels<sup>4</sup> as long or short without distinctions. They made the rule completely one of arbitrary lengthening and shortening [συστολῆς καὶ ἐκτάσεως]. Then they fitted into their metrical lines all place-names and personal names without regard for quantities; and having committed all these outrages they wish to be regarded as serious literary men because they write poetry. In fact, they have only strung together some unmetrical words which have no real connection with meter. Even this would not be too bad. But now they have gone on to a further stage which is much worse than this. . . . It is shameful even to speak of this subject. They compose verses which they call *political*, regarding all quantitative meter in them as foolish, but observing two stress-accents, one in the middle and one at the end. Then they say that the line is right. Stress-accents, oh Earth and Sun, instead of syllables, long and short. With these again they make up their meter—as if we wrote with stress-accents, and not with letters. Yet now this evil practice has become general. If one were to mock their undertaking, one could say that they filched such a practice from Ionian women. For this is the meter in which they mourn over the corpses of the dead at funerals. But I am so far from uttering this libel on the colleagues who share my profession that I should rebuke anybody who dared even to drop hints along these lines.

<sup>2</sup> Περὶ γραμματικῆς διάλογος, ed. L. Bachmann, *Anecdota Graeca*, II (Leipzig, 1828), 3–101; the translated portion is on 98–101. For chronology, see C. Wendel, *RE*, 20, cols. 2203–9.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., P. Maas, *Greek Metre* (Oxford, 1962), 13–15.

<sup>4</sup> The dichronic vowels, α, ι, and υ, are not distinguished in length by the way in which they are written, unlike ε and η, ο and ω. The use and abuse of these vowels, as will be seen, was a controversial question of Byzantine poetics. For a discussion of theories see F. Kuhn, *Symbolae ad doctrinæ περὶ διχρόνων historiam pertinentes*, Breslauer philologische Abhandlungen, 6.3 (Breslau, 1892).

From you, Neophron, I shall not conceal the source from which they derived it, particularly as you are an apt pupil. . . . The verses which have recently come to be called political were clearly sometimes used by all the tragedians and Aristophanes. But they did not use them without quantitative meter: the tragedians used them in trochaics, and Aristophanes also in iambics. All wrote them within the limits of the tetrameter catalectic. Moreover, it is beyond all question that they never spared a thought for the beat and rhythm of the stress-accents. They paid careful attention only to the elements which make up an accurate quantitative meter. Wherever the stress-accent happened to fall on a syllable, they made no attempt to change it. But while they were composing in this way it happened that in some verses a fluent sort of rhythm resulted from the position of the stress-accent, and an attractive arrangement of the beat.

Examples follow from Euripides, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristophanes.

. . .<sup>5</sup> At the beginning there was a determination to handle the meter supremely well. But gradually a little later—for everybody is prone to slip into inferior, easy-going ways—they banished quantitative meter from their sight, so that not even a trace of it appears in the lines, and showed concern only for the pattern of the accents. And now they are exactly like a body empty of a soul—for the soul of a line is its meter—wrapped only in its grave-clothes. For this is the image which I myself would apply to the stress-accents. . . . If, however, they dared to produce unmetrical versions of the heroic hexameter and iambic trimeter, it seemed only a small step to strip iambic and trochaic tetrameters of their quantitative meter. There is a danger, my dear Neophron, that they will go further, and conceive a contempt for the stress-accent as something very trivial, and will decree that any group of words of any kind is a verse. But you, who are far better than this, you must grasp your opportunity, and compose these political verses either in iambics or trochaics, whichever you wish, since it is fashionable in our times to regard as correct the strict observance of the harmony of the stress-accents. For you will have combined two elements skillfully into one: the meter of the feet and the rhythm of the accents. A poem in such verses would be very like a tree laden with fruit, but covered also in leaves for decoration. You must not take it amiss if, while others are stringing together numerous unmetrical lines,<sup>6</sup> you are held back to some extent by the meter, and appear inferior to them in the composition of verse because you write very little. For which would seem better to you, one live man or fifteen corpses? One gold statue or ten of bronze?

<sup>5</sup> This slight break in the sense results from a lacuna in the published manuscript.

<sup>6</sup> As an extreme example of the competition which Neophron might have to face, there is the *'Απανθίσματος ἡτοι συλλογή τῆς παλαιᾶς καὶ νέας Διαθήκης* of Meletios Galesiates. The work was to be in seven books. Book IV alone is edited, in 'Ο "Αθως, 8–9 (Karies, 1928), and includes more than 15,000 lines. Books I–III seem to exist in manuscript; V–VII were probably never written. See L. Petit, *DTC*, 10.1, 536–38; H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im Byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1959), 678–79.

From this statement one can determine Planudes' idea of the hierarchy of metrical excellence. At the top are hexameters and elegiacs. Below them come iambics—in practice nearly always iambic trimeters—written at several different levels of accuracy. Yet even faulty iambics are respectable. Beneath them, a large step down in the hierarchy, lie political verses, which Planudes at first can hardly bring himself to mention. He accuses literary men of stealing them from a disreputable oral source—Anatolian funeral songs. But now comes a sharp change of attitude. The accusation is withdrawn, and attack is turned to defense. Planudes has realized, perhaps, that his condemnation of those who used this meter would embrace many of the most learned men of the last four centuries. Political verse was already accepted in practice, and must now be incorporated into metrical theory.

The explanation offered to Neophron is an attempt to shorten the qualitative gap separating the political verse from the Byzantine iambic trimeter. The latter is a relaxed variant of the major metrical pattern of Attic tragedy and comedy. Why then should he not derive the political verse from another prominent meter of Athenian drama? All three tragedians and Aristophanes wrote catalectic tetrameters which at times happen to meet the syllabic and rhythmic requirements of political verse. Palaitimos thus defends the latter as a degenerate descendant of the former. Political verse has become as respectable as inaccurate iambics.

Planudes' analysis has been accepted by some modern historians of meter.<sup>7</sup> It does, however, present serious problems. In the first place, it reads like a perfect example of the commonest reflex of Byzantine literary criticism, which traced all formal aspects of contemporary writing to a source among the revered authors of antiquity. Planudes' judgment here is so conventional that it needs independent supporting evidence. Further, he quotes Attic examples from both the iambic and trochaic forms of the tetrameter, which in quantitative metrical terms are sharply differentiated. He does not explain how they have fused over the centuries into a single rhythmical pattern. Moreover, his explanation leaves a difficult historical gap. Whereas iambic trimeters of some description have survived from every century between Aeschylus and Planudes,

<sup>7</sup> This was the case in the nineteenth century, when there was generally a tacit assumption that stress-accent had directly replaced quantity as the fundamental principle of the verse. Discussion centered first round the extent to which rules could be applied to the position of the stress-accents: see R. J. F. Henrichsen, *Über die sogenannten politischen Verse bei den Griechen* (German trans., Leipzig, 1839), still perhaps the most reliable study of the whole question. Later scholars began to inquire whether the rhythmic form had originated at a learned or popular level. K. Krumbacher, for example, believed that the source lay in contamination between the ancient quantitative iambic and trochaic tetrameters (Krumbacher, 651), but that the oldest surviving examples were popular proverbs in the text of John Klimax (*idem, Mittelgriechische Sprichwörter*, SBMun, Philos.-Philol. und histor. Kl., 2.1 [Munich, 1893], 233–34). He gave a list of earlier studies in Krumbacher, 652. The twentieth century has seen a more careful approach, resulting in a willingness to admit the failure of modern scholarship to provide a convincing solution, e.g., H.-G. Beck, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Volksliteratur* (Munich, 1971), 15. Careful analysis has been made of the characteristics of early popular verse, particularly through its distich-pattern (S. Kyriakides) and through its later musical form (S. Baud-Bovy): details may be found in Beck, *Volksliteratur*, xxi, and in K. Mitsakis, *Βυζαντινή Υπνογραφία*, I (Thessaloniki, 1971), 323–29. L. Politis and J. Koder have announced new studies based on metrical analyses of surviving political verse; their preliminary statements will be used extensively later in this paper.

there is a gap of more than a millennium between the last consistent use of the Greek tetrameter by Menander<sup>8</sup> and the first sure example of political verse at the beginning of the tenth century. Planudes' words cannot be accepted uncritically.

Before leaving his discussion I should like to stress some points which will be relevant later. His accusation that the verse derived from popular oral laments has already been noted. He suggests that Neophron's verse should follow simultaneously both the old quantitative rules and the new rhythmic patterns. Both iambic and trochaic quantitative meters are suggested as possible fathers of the rhythmic foundling. Finally, Planudes' description of the verse, his reduction of its essential features to two stress-accents, is very like the conclusion to which some modern scholars have been compelled.

From around 1300 the survey must move back to the mid-twelfth century to consider the opinions of Eustathios of Thessalonica.<sup>9</sup> Commenting on a synizesis in the first line of the *Iliad*, he explains that the vowels -εω in the word Πηληϊάδεω are forced together, and pronounced and scanned as one. He continues:

This is clearly demonstrated also by the *demotic* verses, which once were scanned in quantitative trochaics, as Aeschylus shows in the *Persae*, but have recently come to be called *political*. For their metrical limit is fifteen syllables. There is a widespread tendency to increase the number of syllables to seventeen, or even more. These syllables—that is those above the limit of fifteen—if they are separated by consonants in pronunciation, are laughed at as unrhythymical and derided as too long for the meter. If they are spoken only with undivided vowels, their extra length is concealed by the swift combination of vowels in pronunciation, and the trochaic rhythm is preserved.

His description of synizesis, the combination of surplus syllables in pronunciation to avoid breaking the meter, will be familiar to all who have read aloud any early Demotic verse. Synizesis is also common in the two or three experiments in vernacular political verse made by contemporaries of Eustathios. It is not, however, a prominent characteristic of political verse in a more educated language.<sup>10</sup> If these words are meant to describe the surviving corpus of political lines from Eustathios' day and before, they greatly exaggerate the role of synizesis. It is tempting, therefore, to suggest that he is referring to a literary stratum which has not survived. The temptation is increased by the purely auditory description given of the process of synizesis, and by the words οἱ πολλοί, translated above as “there is a widespread tendency,” but more likely to mean “common people.” Could Eustathios be referring to political verse in an oral and popular form? An answer to this question will be attempted later.

<sup>8</sup> E.g., *Dyscolos*, 708–83.

<sup>9</sup> *Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem pertinentes*, ed. M. van der Valk (Leiden, 1971), I, 19.

<sup>10</sup> The best discussion of synizesis is found in Henrichsen, *op. cit.*, 77–89, attacking previous claims that synizesis did not exist at a learned level. But, as he explains, “Viel weiter erstreckt sich die Synizesis in den Romaischen [i.e., vernacular] Gedichten—auf welche Eustathios vielleicht zunächst Rücksicht genommen hat.”

Meanwhile, two other points in his account must be noted. First, Eustathios claims that *demotic* verse has just been named *political*. Second, there is again ambivalence between iambics and trochaics. We are told that the rhythm of political verse derives from the trochaic tetrameter, the meter prominent in the *Persae*. More unexpectedly, the rhythm of political verse to be preserved by synizesis is also called trochaic. The phrase “trochaic rhythm” is meaningless to me unless it refers to a verse in which the stress falls on odd-numbered syllables. In the political line, however, the two obligatory stresses fall on even-numbered syllables. The preference elsewhere is always more or less strongly for the even against the odd:<sup>11</sup>

|     |     |   |   |   |        |     |     |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|-----|-----|---|---|---|--------|-----|-----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| (/) | (/) | x | x | / |        | (/) | (/) |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| x   | x   | x | x | x | { or } | x   | x   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 1   | 2   | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6      | 7   | 8   | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |

This is an iambic rhythm.

Planudes and Eustathios are the only Byzantine writers to discuss the political line at any length. Fortunately, it is possible to supplement them with numerous brief references, and with indirect indications in writings in this meter of the reasons for its use. But the changed nature of the material will impose a change in the pace of the discussion. While it has been possible to analyze isolated passages of comment in their own terms, examination must now turn to less explicit references, which can only be valid as evidence when viewed against a broader background. Eustathios' contemporary John Tzetzes, for example, gives constant hints of the conflict of reasons which lay behind his choice of the political line for most of his writing in verse. To grasp these hints, and to understand the attitudes to which they point, it will be necessary to undertake a detailed examination of his unusual literary personality.<sup>12</sup> Tzetzes' attitudes will in turn provide background for the analysis of isolated comments in the works of other writers.

Great care must be taken to allow for idiosyncrasies which color all of Tzetzes' writing, in political verse or not. Most of his work, for example, is a prose or verse lecture to one student who is given instructions in the imperative. Much of it is poorly organized, with frequent personal interventions. He claims that his political verse is being written at great speed, with references quoted from

<sup>11</sup> As will be seen from the table, a political verse must have 15 pronounced syllables, with a break after 8. The only other invariable rules are the stress-accents on 14 and either 6 or 8. There are no stresses on 7, 13, and 15, except occasionally on unimportant words (articles, pronouns, prepositions, etc.) at 7 and 13. Earlier in the half-lines, 4 and 12 are much more often stressed than 3, 5, and 11. With 1, 2, 9, and 10 the accent is less regulated, but tends to be more common on the second syllable of each pair. The best published discussion is in J. Koder's edition of the Hymns of Symeon the New Theologian, SC, 156, I (Paris, 1969), 87–92. Koder's published work plainly does not exhaust the material which he has collected.

<sup>12</sup> There is no comprehensive modern study of Tzetzes. Wendel, *RE*, 7A<sup>2</sup>, cols. 1959–2010, gives an excellent factual basis on which such a study could be built. Wendel draws on, but does not entirely supersede, H. Giske, *De Ioannis Tzetzae scriptis ac vita* (Diss. Rostock, 1881), and G. Hart, “De Tzetzarum nomine vitis scriptis,” *Jahrbücher für classische Philologie*, Suppl. 12 (Leipzig, 1880–81), 1–75.

memory.<sup>13</sup> In the *Historiae* the reader is twice challenged to visit him at work, to see his independence from books, and to watch him composing so quickly that copying quotations would slow him down.<sup>14</sup> Much space is wasted in the *Historiae* in speculation whether he could finish the work on the folios available.<sup>15</sup> But no valid conclusions may be drawn from these passages about his attitude to political verse, since each piece of evidence may be paralleled from Tzetzes' work in other meters or in prose.

Personal reminiscence can obtrude even in hexameters. In the *Carmina Iliaca* Odysseus' and Diomedes' mission inside Troy is interrupted by memories of Tzetzes' own difficulties with the wife of the Eparch of Verroia.<sup>16</sup> His own journey on foot from Verroia to Constantinople is inserted into the Memnon story.<sup>17</sup> He boasts in letters of his swift improvisation of accurate iambics.<sup>18</sup> He quotes Euripides in a scholion, guessing wrongly which play is being quoted,<sup>19</sup> and condemns another Euripidean passage by saying that he is only able to quote it because of a chance note. All that is worthwhile he has learned by heart.<sup>20</sup> His scholia are equally obsessed with wasting paper. He apologizes for unnecessary comment on some lines of Aristophanes, but explains that he would otherwise have had to leave empty space on the page.<sup>21</sup>

Tzetzes did not control the violence of his language, particularly in praising himself or attacking others. In the *Theogony*, for example, he claims greater knowledge of the genealogy of gods and heroes than a hundred ancient writers, headed by Homer, together with all the gods and heroes themselves—if they had really existed.<sup>22</sup> In a note on the *Plutus* he makes a violent personal attack on an unnamed grammarian.<sup>23</sup> He describes a ghostly presence, scabbed with camel disease, cat-faced, anchovy-eyed, with the voice of a weeping eunuch. His sharp tongue was usually employed in the defense of stern orthodoxy in the interpretation of classical authors. The unnamed scholar had provoked him by claiming the existence of dichronic vowels in Homer. This issue angers Tzetzes more than any other.<sup>24</sup> He can be equally severe on himself, pointing out his own metrical errors in marginal notes like, “When I wrote this, I still used the dichronic vowels like the buffaloes.”<sup>25</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See the passages collected by H. Hunger, “Johannes Tzetzes, Allegorien zur Odyssee, Buch 13–24,” *BZ*, 48 (1955), 46, note on Book 24, lines 80ff.

<sup>14</sup> *Historiae*, ed. P. A. M. Leone (Naples, 1968), VIII, 173–81; X, 355–61.

<sup>15</sup> See the passages collected by Leone, *ibid.*, note on IV, 922; add especially VI, 382–93; XII, 881–86; XIII, 608–13.

<sup>16</sup> *Antehomerica, Homeric et Posthomeric*, ed. F. Jacobs (Leipzig, 1793; rep. Osnabrück, 1972): *Posthom.* 620–23.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 284–89. Tzetzes' scholion, *ad loc.*, explains that he was not, in fact, alive during the Trojan War!

<sup>18</sup> *Epistulae*, ed. P. A. M. Leone (Leipzig, 1972), 129–31 (Eps. 89–90).

<sup>19</sup> *Scholia in Aristophanem*, Pars IV, eds. L. Massa Positano, D. Holwerda, W. J. W. Koster, 3 vols. (Groningen-Amsterdam, 1960–62), 1072.2–4. He guesses the *Troades*, then changes his mind to the *Andromache*; the quotation comes from the *Troades*.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 1048.7–12.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.16–20.

<sup>22</sup> *Theogony*, ed. I. Bekker, AbhBerl. Phil.-hist.Kl. (Berlin, 1840), 147–69, vv. 26–33.

<sup>23</sup> *Scholia in Aristophanem*, 43.21–44.2.

<sup>24</sup> E.g., *ibid.*, 43.3–20; 44.25–46.21; 71.6–13; 99.6–19; 122.10–14.

<sup>25</sup> “Οτε ταῦτα ἔγραφον ἔτι κατεχρώμην τοῖς διχρόνοις, ὡς οἱ βούθαλοι (*Historiae*, schol. to III, 61).

His taste for controversy must have aroused opposition. Eustathios makes a frosty remark about οἱ νῦν στρυφοὶ λογισταὶ τῶν στιχουργούντων—our austere metrical experts—who reject dichronic vowels in Homer.<sup>26</sup> These words fit Tzetzes better than any other contemporary scholar whose opinions are known, though the identification must remain unsure.<sup>27</sup> The best-documented case of an attack on him, and that which seems to have aroused the greatest response from him, is concerned with an item of vocabulary. Tzetzes had glossed a rare term for a moth with three good classical words and κανδηλοσθέστρα.<sup>28</sup> This more popular word was added, he later claimed, to be more intelligible to the young readers for whom the work was intended.<sup>29</sup> A critic maliciously observed that he did not understand this vulgarism. Tzetzes addresses his reply to βουβαλοπάππας—archbuffalo—and τράγου νίε, σεληνιαζόμενε—moonstruck son of a goat—and attacks the man's own work.<sup>30</sup> He defends κανδηλοσθέστρα with absurd claims for his orthodoxy and erudition. He even writes an iambic line with words so archaic and elevated that they cannot be intelligible to his opponent.<sup>31</sup> The victim of this unusual refutation was a member of the κουστωδία,<sup>32</sup> the gang who attack everything that Tzetzes writes, or so he alleges. At times, particularly in his Aristophanes scholia, his attitude seems to verge on persecution mania. Metrical observations, in particular, seem to be made under threat of violent attack.<sup>33</sup>

These facts have been collected here to point a paradox which demands explanation. Tzetzes, as a violent conservative, was extremely vulnerable to criticism for lapses from his own high standards of classical rigidity, as in the κανδηλοσθέστρα episode. Most of the controversies in which he participated concerned the dichronic vowels, a fairly trivial metrical issue. Yet at the same time he chose the political line for his own work more frequently than any of the more respectable meters. Why did he compromise his principles so far? Why did he expose himself to attacks from the κουστωδία, who could easily have disproved the classical pedigree of the political verse? Why was he apparently not attacked in this way? I know of only one mild adverse reaction among his contemporaries to his political verses. Gregory of Corinth<sup>34</sup> refers an opinion to Tzetzes' φλυαροστιχίδια—nonsense-verses—alluding to his political-verse paraphrase of Hermogenes' rhetorical works. But the metrical form did not prevent Gregory from reading the paraphrase and referring to it three times in all.

The explanation of this paradox will begin by examination of the first two

<sup>26</sup> *Commentarii*, ed. van der Valk (as in note 9 *supra*), I, 52.19–20.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, cxxxiv.

<sup>28</sup> *Scholia in Lycophronis Alexandram*, ed. E. Scheer (Berlin, 1908), schol. to v. 84.

<sup>29</sup> *Historiae*, IX, 961.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, 958, 960–80; *Scholia in Aristophanem*, 835.9; *Epistulae*, 92 (Ep. 64).

<sup>31</sup> Πίσυγγε, τέμνε τὰς λαιθάργους ἀβύλας (*Scholia in Aristophanem*, 836.8).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 772.11 and note; cf. 221.19, 222.5, 442.7, 836.2 and 12, 837.3.

<sup>33</sup> A large proportion of his little metrical lessons are followed by a savage growl at his opponents, which can only be interpreted as defense against expected attack. See *ibid.*, 70.24–71.13; 72.12–73.18; 98.22–99.19; 105.12–15; 122.2–14; 123.16–124.11; 151.21–152.8; 221.7–224.2; etc.

<sup>34</sup> Ed. C. Walz, *Rhetores Graeci*, VII, 2 (Stuttgart-Tübingen, 1834), 1098.24ff.; cf. 1157.25ff., 1186.12ff.

works which Tzetzes wrote in the political line, the *Theogony*<sup>35</sup> and the *Iliad Allegories*.<sup>36</sup> Both are dedicated to patronesses named Irene, high in the imperial family: the *Theogony* to the wife of the Sevastokrator Andronikos, elder brother of Manuel Comnenos; the *Allegories* to Manuel's first wife, once Bertha von Sulzbach. In both works, but particularly in the former, Tzetzes is feeling his way, nervous that the reasons for the meter and language used will be misunderstood, and always ready to defend himself and to brag of his knowledge and ability.

The dedications were not merely a matter of form. The *Theogony* is plainly the result of a specific commission. Irene has asked, he says, *among other things* (πρὸς ἄλλοις) for a catalogue of the gods and a genealogy of the heroes (19–21). His thanks for her gifts are conventional (35–45); but later her wishes constantly guide the course of the work. Ancestors and bastards of Priam are omitted as beyond his commission and likely to confuse his patroness (408–16). Later he stops himself three times on the verge of adding material which would be useless to her (427, 494–95, 526). Details on a group of major heroes are included because they are necessary—χρειώδεις—to her (529). The main part of the work ends with the line ἔχεις τοιγάρ τὸ δάνειον ἀπέτισα τὸ χρέος—your loan is repayed, I have met my obligation (721)—followed by an apparent suggestion that Irene should learn by heart all that he had written (723).

The *Iliad Allegories* begin with an extended metaphor of the Empress as the moon, wishing to illumine Homer. Tzetzes offers a translation of the *Iliad* to assist her (Prooemion, 1–40). Later his aim shrinks to a brief précis. He asks for large rewards, because a précis will require much research for small results. The full translation is again offered as an alternative, for the Empress' wishes are plainly in doubt (488–504). At the end of the introduction he becomes really impatient with her silence (1207–14). Does she want a brief treatment of the *Iliad* as a whole, or independent sections for each book? "Let me be told quickly, for I am in real perplexity."<sup>37</sup> Finally there is a note between Books XV and XVI. Tzetzes had lost his sponsor, since the Empress had died, and it seemed that the rest of the work would not be written. But Constantine Kotertzes had come forward with the necessary money.

Here are three distinct proofs of the reality of these acts of patronage. In the first poem, Tzetzes is following closely a fairly detailed request; in the second, he is at first in difficulties because of the lack of details in his commission. Later he breaks off when his payment stops, but resumes when a new sponsor appears.

The patronesses exercised firm control over form as well as content. At the beginning of the *Theogony*, Tzetzes tells the Sevastokratorissa:

Since you seek...a catalogue of the gods and a genealogy of the heroes, you must give me your imperial attention, and I shall tell you everything clearly and rapidly, writing hastily and without study, in a

<sup>35</sup> Ed. Bekker (as in note 22 *supra*).

<sup>36</sup> Ed. J. F. Boissonade (Paris, 1851).

<sup>37</sup> Ταχέως δηλωθήτω μοι διαπορῶ γάρ πάνυ (1214).

lamentable way. But if you should ever wish to learn this subject more thoroughly, I too should be pleased to write with study . . .”<sup>38</sup>

The poet is reacting with disapproval to Irene’s choice of literary form. Later he says, “I have met my obligation, recounting important matters in playful writing.”<sup>39</sup> He and others often use παιγνιώδης and its cognates with reference to the political line.<sup>40</sup> It is thus likely that Irene’s formal demands included the use of that meter.

Some of the best evidence in this direction involves the word οἰκονομία. I will not translate it, since I can find no English equivalent which does not prejudge the case I am trying to make. In literary terms, the word seems to refer to a compromise between author and audience, as in canon law it indicates a dispensation, a compromise between punishment and mercy. I think that Tzetzes is usually making an indirect reference to the act of patronage, in which a writer makes a compromise between his own literary purposes and the personality and wishes of his patron. In each of the passages translated below, except perhaps the last, it seems to me that Tzetzes is complaining that outside pressures, through οἰκονομία, are driving him to use a literary form which is distasteful to him.

You want to know of the Greek and Trojan generals: anything more is redundant, full of labor and effort—both to the listeners, and still more so for the writers, particularly when they have written in playful verses. For a mind which is performing a great task will often grow numb, when in matters where it should win praise it seems rather to be providing faults for its detractors, who have no regard for the fact of οἰκονομία. Indeed, forbearing to write the superfluous facts of heroic genealogy in the writing of apes [?], I am putting down here clearly the most important points. The rest needs time and hexameters, and, more important still, a language that will bring pleasure.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Ἐπεὶ . . . ἐκλητεῖς . . .  
θεῶν τε τὸν κατάλογον καὶ γένος τῶν ἡρώων,  
σὺ μὲν ἔμοι τὰς ἀκοὰς τὰς βασιτείους διδίου,  
ἐγὼ δὲ πάντα σοι σαφῶς ἐπιδρομάδην λέξω,  
ἀμελετήτως αὐθωρὸν καὶ κατεστενωμένως.  
Εἰ δέ ποτε θελήσεις μαθεῖν καὶ πλατυτέρως  
κάγω σοι ταῦτα βουληθῶ μετὰ μελέτης γράφειν. . . . (*Theogony*, 19–25).

<sup>39</sup> ἀπέτισα τὸ χρέος,  
ἐν παιγνιώδεσι γραφαῖς συγγράψας τὰ σπουδαῖα (*Ibid.*, 721–22).

<sup>40</sup> E.g., *Theogony*, 499; see note 174 *infra*.

<sup>41</sup> Σὺ γάρ τούς στρατηγούς ζῆτεις ‘Ελλήνων τε καὶ Τρώων  
τὰ δ’ ἄλλα τὰ περιέργα πόνου καὶ κόπου πλέα  
καὶ τοῖς ἀκροωμένοις μέν, τοῖς γράφουσι δὲ πλέον,  
καὶ μᾶλλον παιγνιώδεσι τοῖς στίχοις γεγραφόσι.  
Ναρκᾶν γάρ εἴωθε ψυχὴ πρᾶγμα ποιούσα μέγα,  
ὅταν ἐν οἰστερ πέφυκεν ἐπαίνουν ἐπαξία  
μᾶλλον δοκεῖ τι μωμητὸν ποιεῖν τοῖς μωμοσκόποις,  
μὴ πρὸς αὐτὸ προσβλέψασι τὸ τῆς οἰκονομίας.  
Καὶ δὴ λοιπὸν τὰ περισσά τῆς ἡρωγονίας  
ἔάσσας γράφειν ἀπρεπῶς συγγράμμασι πιθήκων  
τὰ καιρώτερα σαφῶς ἐν τούτοις διαγράφω.  
Τὰ δ’ ἄλλα δέονται καιροῦ καὶ στίχων τῶν ἡρώων,  
καὶ μᾶλλον περισσότερον καὶ γλώσσης εὐθυμούσης (*Theogony*, 496–508).

If anybody senselessly aims a dart of criticism at me, mocking me for having written such work, he may wallow in his criticism as he wishes, but I would make him no word of reply. But you who understand well the fact of οἰκονομία and any sensible, intelligent man who knows οἰκονομία, and the personality and nature for whom I wrote this work—you would attack, I think, his words of criticism, and would not think me a poor writer for failing to write this in an elevated style.<sup>42</sup>

For as the old mythographers wrote that Zeus transformed the Titans into the shape of apes, I too now wish, in the ways of οἰκονομία, to change the heroes into the writing of apes [?].<sup>43</sup>

In a list of Homeric allegories:

...and my little books too, including this worthless volume, written by οἰκονομία through the zeal of the Empress.<sup>44</sup>

After several quotations from Atticist writers who recommend simpler language for simpler readers:

I am a follower of this school, and in every case I have practiced clarity; although I am a spring from which flow all manner of books and words, sometimes I write rather simple and straightforward works, everywhere pursuing the fact of οἰκονομία. For this reason I have now written in simpler language. If anybody hurls a dart of criticism at me over this, he is not a man who knows the ways of οἰκονομία.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Εἰ δέ τις τείνει πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀφρόνως μάώμους βέλος,  
κατασιωκώμενος ἡμῶν τοιαῦτα γεγραφότων,  
ἐκεῖνος μὲν ὡς βούλοιτο μάώμοις ἐπεντρυφάτω,  
ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντως οὐδὲ γρὺ φθεγξαίμεθα πρὸς τούτον,  
Τὸ δὲ καλῶς γινώσκουσα τὸ τῆς οἰκονομίας,  
καὶ πᾶς ἔχεφρων συνετός, εἰδὼς οἰκονομίαν  
καὶ πρόσωπα καὶ τρόπους τε, δι' οὓς ἔγραψα τάδε,  
ἐκείνους μέμψοισθε (δοκῶ) τὴν μωισκόπον γλῶσσαν,  
ἡμᾶς δ' οὐκ ἀν νομίστε τῶν φαύλων συγγραφέων,  
μή κομπηροῖς συγγράμμασιν ταῦτα συγγραφαμένους

(*Ibid.*, 724–33).

<sup>43</sup> Ὡς γάρ αἱ πάλαι γράφουσι τὸν Δία μυθουργίαι  
μεταβολεῖν εἰς μόρφωμα πιθήκων τοὺς Τιτᾶνας,  
οὕτῳ κάγω νῦν βούλομαι τρόποις οἰκονομίας  
μεταβάλλειν τοὺς ἥρωας συγγράμμασι πιθήκων

(*Iliad Allegories*, Prooemion, 37–40).

<sup>44</sup> Καὶ τὰ ἔμὰ βιβλίδια, τὸ εὔτελές τε τόδε,  
οἰκονομίᾳ συγγραφέν, σπουδῇ τῇ τῇς Ἀνάστης...

(*Ibid.*, XVIII, 659–60).

<sup>45</sup> Ὡν ζηλωτής ὁν κέχρημαι πᾶσι τῇ σαφηνείᾳ,  
καίτοιγε βίβλων ὁν πηγὴ καὶ λέξεων παντοῖων,  
ὅτε δὲ καὶ σαφέστερα καὶ βάναυσά που γράφω.  
ἀπανταχοῦ θηρώμενος τὸ τῆς οἰκονομίας·  
οὖν χάριν ἔγραψα καὶ νῦν ἐν λόγοις σαφεστέροις.  
Εἰ δέ τις πέμψει πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἐν τούτοις μάώμους βέλος,  
οὐκ ἔστιν δινθρωπος εἰδὼς τρόπους οἰκονομίας

(*Theogony*, ed. Wendel, 43–49; see note 59 *infra*).

Other passages demonstrate that Tzetzes thought of these books more by the names of their respective patronesses than by their content. Two cross-references from the *Historiae* to the *Iliad Allegories* are made in the form, “while writing the narrative of Homer for the Augusta,” and “in the Augusta’s book.”<sup>46</sup> A reference from the end of the *Allegories*, written for Kotertzes, to an earlier book reads: “We allegorized this before for the Augusta.”<sup>47</sup> The most striking reference is from a scholion to the *Allegories* back to the *Theogony*: “As I wrote in the other book dedicated to a woman” (ἐν ἐτέρῳ γυναικείῳ βιβλῷ).<sup>48</sup>

References to payment have been mentioned above from both these early works. There exists also a long letter, accompanied by a comment in the *Historiae*,<sup>49</sup> on a dispute over payment for the *Iliad Allegories*. Tzetzes elsewhere expresses contempt for gifts and the flattery needed to win them.<sup>50</sup> Yet we know enough about his career, blighted by a silly mistake at the start and later impeded by crippling asthma, to realize that money was very important to him. Poverty is more than a *topos* in his writing.<sup>51</sup> There is no reason to disbelieve him when he claims to live only by teaching and writing: “My words and my writings, by which I obtain the necessities of life, by which alone I am nourished, turning my Muse to silver, as Pindar said of Simonides.”<sup>52</sup> Much of his work brought little recompense: “I have not received gold for my commentaries, merely food, drink, fruit, and the like.”<sup>53</sup> The large sums mentioned in connection with the *Iliad Allegories* must have been a most welcome addition to his income, even though payment was eventually only made in part.<sup>54</sup> Such a man was vulnerable to the influence of patrons on works which he wrote for them, and in fact to changes of taste in the whole literary market.

My conclusions from this survey of the effects of patronage on Tzetzes are simple. Neither of the works examined would have been written without a commission. The subject in each case may have been quite congenial, but the content was too elementary, the language too simple, and the meter inadequate to win the author’s own approval. These features were specially requested by the patronesses, and Tzetzes reluctantly agreed.

These poems apparently brought him no serious criticism, and maybe even some success. Certainly his later poems in political verse, notably the *Odyssey Allegories* and the *Historiae*, are less self-conscious. The *Odyssey Allegories*

<sup>46</sup> . . . γράφων ἔξηγησιν Όμήρου τῇ Αύγούστῃ (*Historiae*, IX, 274); τῇ τῆς Αύγούστης βιβλῷ (*Ibid.*, XIII, 618).

<sup>47</sup> ‘Ημεῖς δ’ ἡλληγορήσαμεν πρὶν τῇ Αύγούστῃ τάδε (XXIV, 284).

<sup>48</sup> Schol. to *Iliad Allegories*, Prooemion, 532, in P. Matranga, *Anecdota Graeca*, II (Rome, 1850), 605.

<sup>49</sup> *Epistulae*, 79–84 (Ep. 57); *Historiae*, IX, 274–90.

<sup>50</sup> E.g., *Historiae*, X, 851; *Epistulae*, 111 (Ep. 75).

<sup>51</sup> See *Historiae*, I, 282–86, and *Epistulae*, *passim*, especially 69–70 (Ep. 49), 119–20 (Ep. 80), 134–36 (Ep. 93), 138–40 (Ep. 95), 142–46 (Eps. 98–99); Wendel, *RE*, 7A<sup>2</sup>, cols. 1960–65.

<sup>52</sup> Οἱ λόγοι μου . . . καὶ συγγράμματα, οἰσπερ καρποῦμαι τὰ πρὸς ζωήν, οἰσπερ καὶ μόνοις ἔγώ διατρέφομαι, τὴν μοῦσαν, καθὼς δὲ Πίνδαρος περὶ Σιμωνίδου φησίν, ἀργυρέαν ποιούμενος (*Epistulae*, 109–10 [Ep. 75]).

<sup>53</sup> Αὔτὸς δ’ οὐδὲ ἐρμηνεύμασιν ἐλάμβανεν χρυσίον,  
μόλις δὲ βρώματα, πωτούς, διπώρας καὶ τοιαῦτα

(*Historiae*, XI, 24–25).

<sup>54</sup> The story is told in *Historiae*, IX, 274–90. He was offered twelve gold nomismata for each quaternion.

announce without hesitation or apology that he will write in “a clear, comprehensible, and rather playful way, and in the offscourings of kitchen talk.”<sup>55</sup> Toward the end the reader is told, “You have everything set out for you in clear language, which expresses simple thoughts in everyday speech, not in a bombastic diction which is strange and incomprehensible.”<sup>56</sup> Tzetzes is under no illusions that his poems are appreciated for their literary qualities. He had already boasted that his work was an easy route to an appearance of learning.<sup>57</sup> The same thought recurs later, but strikes him as less attractive since it degrades his own position as a literary artist.<sup>58</sup> Comparison of the two pairs of works suggests that the *Odyssey Allegories* and the *Historiae* are the writings of a man who regrets that he must write as a popularizer, even though his “popular” audience may hardly at first have extended beyond court circles. But he now feels fairly secure from criticism in that role.

The theoretical framework on which his popularization was based had already been set out at the end of the *Theogony*,<sup>59</sup> with a completeness and directness perhaps unique in Byzantine writing. From the facts at our disposal, it seems likely that his words were a rationalization forced upon him by the pressures of the literary marketplace. In that case, one must regret that such pressures were not more frequent in Byzantine literary history. “It is my custom to examine personalities and characters, occasions and events, and to write what is appropriate” ( $\tau\alpha\ \pi\tau\epsilon\pi\omega\delta\eta$ ) (Bekker, 734–35). So he will write in a learned way for the learned, rustically for countrymen, technically for specialized craftsmen. If he employed for them the flowery paraphrases of the Atticists, he could expect to be treated as a lunatic (Bekker, 736–46). Women and other groups of simple people needed similar concessions. Anyone addressing such audiences in the high style would be guilty of no less barbarism than would a man who spoke little Greek when he tried to make himself understood to Greeks (Bekker, 747–55; Wendel, 16–42). Included in the argument is a little tour de force of linguistic knowledge, extending his thesis to include speaking in Russian to a Russian, or in Alanic to an Alan, and so on (Bekker, 766–77; Moravcsik, 16–35). This practice is described as an excellent example of *oikonomia* (Moravcsik, 34–35). A briefer exposition of the doctrine of  $\tau\alpha\ \pi\tau\epsilon\pi\omega\delta\eta$  may be found in the paraphrase of Hermogenes.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Κάν τοῖς σαφέσι καὶ ληπτοῖς καὶ παιγνιωδεστέροις  
καὶ τοῖς ἀποκαθάρμασι τοῦ λόγου τῆς οἰκίας

(ed. H. Hunger, “Johannes Tzetzes, Allegorien zur Odyssee, Buch 1–12,”  
*BZ*, 49 [1956], 249–310, Prooemion, 40–41).

<sup>56</sup> \*Εχεις δύναπτυχθέντα σοι πάντα σαφεῖ τῇ λέξει  
καὶ τοῖς τυχούσασις ὀκοαῖς τελούσῃ τῶν εὐλήπτων,  
οὐ κομπολακυθούσῃ δὲ καὶ ξένη καὶ ἀγνώστῳ

(*Odyssey Allegories* [as in note 13 *supra*], XXIV, 277–79).

<sup>57</sup> *Iliad Allegories*, Prooemion, 480–87.

<sup>58</sup> *Historiae*, I, 270–74.

<sup>59</sup> Three texts are needed to include the whole of the ending: Bekker (as in note 22 *supra*) reaches line 777; J. Moravcsik, “Barbarische Sprachreste in der Theogonie des Johannes Tzetzes,” *BNJbb*, 7 (1928–29), 352–65, edits 35 lines, beginning at Bekker’s line 766; and C. Wendel, “Das unbekannte Schluzstück der Theogonie des Tzetzes,” *BZ*, 40 (1940), 23–26, publishes the remaining 55 lines.

<sup>60</sup> Ed. Walz, *Rhetores Graeci*, III (1834), 684.4–17; J. A. Cramer, *Anecdota Graeca Oxoniensia*, IV (Oxford, 1837), 34.1–14.

Tzetzes is disillusioned with the audience available for works in respectable meters. He constantly attacks those who praise simplistic metricians as great experts, and wonders why he himself should go to great trouble to write poems or metrical scholia too subtle for most of his readers.<sup>61</sup> The failure of his own writings in ἰαμβοι τεχνικοι, the most ambitious of which was left unfinished,<sup>62</sup> is a constant source of regret. In the *Historiae* one reference to this theme causes him to cry ὡ συμφορᾶς ἐσχάτης, while another provokes a thought about the coming humiliation and capture of Constantinople by the barbarians.<sup>63</sup> The first of Tzetzes' *Iambi*<sup>64</sup> consists almost entirely of ironic advice on how to educate a child to take advantage of the decay of poetry and metrical studies.

To judge by Tzetzes' own words, clarity and sharpness of detail are the chief virtues of his poems in the political line. They are full of words like σαφῶς, λεπτῶς, and ἀκριβῶς, which are specially common at points where the poet is explaining the purpose and form of his work.<sup>65</sup> It is not difficult to suggest a connection between political verse and clarity of expression. This was one of the few means of expression at Tzetzes' disposal where he had no classical models to follow and no classical comparisons to fear.<sup>66</sup> He could make his own selection of vocabulary, style, and sentence structure, and use them much more flexibly than in any quantitative meter. Political verse was a better medium of communication than prose, as Tzetzes himself showed by writing the *Historiae* as a commentary on his prose letters. As a literary form it had the advantage of being beneath contempt, because there were no standards by which to judge it.

For Tzetzes, the political verse was not a meter. I know of none of his scholia offering metrical corrections to any of his thousands of political lines, though he appears to have made many mistakes. There is a metrical scholion to the *Historiae*, but it refers to one of the few iambics scattered among thirteen thousand lines of political verse.<sup>67</sup> Iambics are even fewer in the letters; but two false quantities have been marked, and a complete verse letter to his dying brother has been suppressed, as it was written inaccurately because of the violence of his emotion.<sup>68</sup> One brief passage of iambics in the Hermogenes paraphrase has also been condemned for using dichronic vowels, with the excuse

<sup>61</sup> E.g., *Historiae*, X, 64–76; XII, 223–46; *Scholia in Aristophanem*, 42.12–46.21, 122.5–14; C. Harder, “Johannes Tzetzes’ Kommentar zu Porphyrius περὶ πέντε φωνῶν,” *BZ*, 4 (1895), 315–16.

<sup>62</sup> *Historiae*, XII, 249–50.

<sup>63</sup> XII, 251; XI, 975–89.

<sup>64</sup> Ed. P. A. M. Leone, “Ioannis Tzetzae Iambi,” *RSBN*, N.S., 6–7 (1969–70), 135–44.

<sup>65</sup> *Odyssey Allegories* (as in note 55 *supra*), 305 (note to Prooemion, 31): “Auf die σαφήνεια seiner Darstellung ist Tzetzes besonders stolz.” This remark and its eight references are rather an understatement of the case. As signs of a trend which continues throughout his work in the political line: *Historiae*, XII, has 4 examples of σαφῶς used of Tzetzes’ work or its relationship with the reader (10, 35, 736, 737) and 2 of σαφεστάτως (420, 547). The first 600 lines of the *Iliad Allegories*’ Prooemion have λεπτῶς (171, 250, 505), κατὰ λεπτὸν (47, 479), σαφῶς (87), σαφέστερον (317), ἀκριβωμένως (171, 505), ἀκριβεστέρως (109); in the 340 lines of *Odyssey Allegories*, I, there are λεπτῶς (50, 115), σαφέστερον (240), σαφέστατα (116), ἀκριβωμένως (50). Such lists of references to Tzetzes’ own work could easily be multiplied.

<sup>66</sup> The only other choice available was the strophic rhythmical patterns of church music; they were used by Niketas of Serrai and others. See W. Studemund, *Anecdota varia Graeca et Latini*, I (Berlin, 1886), 270–79, and Krumbacher, 587–88.

<sup>67</sup> See note 25 *supra*.

<sup>68</sup> *Epistolae*, ed. T. Pressel (Tübingen, 1851), 3 note 3 (schol. to Ep. 1); 12 note 1 (schol. to Ep. 9); 12 (heading to missing Ep. 10).

that Tzetzes was young at the time when he wrote it.<sup>69</sup> But the most graphic proof may be seen in his Περὶ μέτρων,<sup>70</sup> itself composed in political verse. Toward the end he gives illustrations of many different quantitative meters, from the shortest to the longest, alternating each example with political verses giving its name. At first, examples are much shorter than labels. But they slowly grow, until with the tetrameter catalectic example and label are of the same length. Yet neither here nor anywhere else in this treatise is there any mention of the political verse in which it is written. Here is proof of the unmetsrical status of the verse. The connection with the tetrameter mentioned by Eustathios and Planudes had no reality for Tzetzes.

Several insights have now been found into the paradox of Tzetzes' choice of this meter, but none that is positive or satisfactory. The onus for the choice in two poems may be taken from the author and given to two patronesses. Yet this does not explain why the imperial ladies made that demand. Tzetzes defends himself by the doctrine of τὰ πρεπώδη, saying that he must use simple language in addressing a simple patron or a half-educated public. He is disillusioned with the reception given to his more correct verse. Yet he does not show why that simple language should be expressed in political verse, why he should not try prose, for example, or inaccurate iambics as an alternative. One may speculate that the political verse could be used with precision and clarity of expression because it had no status as a classical meter. Yet this negative point cannot be the whole answer. Why was this arrangement of syllables chosen, rather than any other among the thousands of imaginable patterns not disqualified by direct classical descent?

There is little point in trying to answer these questions for Tzetzes alone. He was not the only writer of his time to use this meter, nor even, it seems, the most prolific. During the period from the accession of John II Comnenos in 1118 to the end of the century, there is an enormous surviving corpus of this verse, much of it anonymous or of doubtful or multiple attribution, from which evidence may be drawn before attempting conclusions for Tzetzes. The corpus is particularly connected with John II, his sons, and their wives. Tzetzes' *Theogony*, as we have seen, was dedicated to Irene, wife of the Sevastokrator Andronikos Comnenos, elder brother of Manuel I. This pair and their children are involved in some way in dozens of poems filling thousands of lines of the Prodromic Mangana-codex Marcianus XI 22, most of them in the political line.<sup>71</sup> Andronikos is probably addressed in one of the vernacular experiments of the Ptochoprodromic corpus.<sup>72</sup> Irene is the dedicatee of Constantine Manasses' Σύνοψις ἱστορική<sup>73</sup> and of a doubly attributed astrological poem,<sup>74</sup> both in politi-

<sup>69</sup> Οἱ στίχοι καταχρῶντο δὲ νεάλοντι διχρόνοις (ed. Cramer [as in note 60 *supra*]), 97.30).

<sup>70</sup> Ed. Cramer, *Anecdota Graeca Oxoniensia*, III (1836), 302–33, especially 328.23.

<sup>71</sup> Conveniently listed in S. Papadimitriu, 'Ο Πρόδρομος τοῦ Μαρκιανοῦ κώδικος XI 22, *VizVrem*, 10 (1903), 107–10.

<sup>72</sup> Eds. D. C. Hesselink and H. Pernot, *Poèmes prodromiques en grec vulgaire* (Amsterdam, 1910), 38–48 (poem II).

<sup>73</sup> Bonn ed. (1837), 3, note to heading.

<sup>74</sup> Ed. E. Miller, *Notices et Extraits*, 23.2 (1872), 8–39, as by Theodore Prodromos; ed. S. Lampros, Νέος Ἑλλ., 16 (1922), 60–66, as by Constantine Manasses.

cal verse. An even longer list of dedications could be made out for Manuel himself and his wives. Most of this corpus consists of occasional poems, which seem to give no direct hints of the reasons for their composition in the political line. They will have an important place later in this study. Here we may examine the few direct pieces of evidence for the question in hand.

Manasses' Σύνοψις ἱστορική seems to have been specially commissioned by Irene in form as well as in content, just as she sponsored Tzetzes' *Theogony*. Manasses begins with a tribute to his patroness' determination in her literary pursuits (1–6). He continues:

Since you have desired, as a foster child of learning, that a comprehensible and clear treatise should be written for you, giving plain teaching in ancient history, and who held power from the beginning, and how long they continued, over whom they ruled, and for how many years, I shall accept the onus of the task, though it is a difficult and burdensome matter, and involves much work. For my efforts in this writing are encouraged by the size of your presents and by your generosity, and the thirst which comes from my toil and labor is slaked by your frequent gifts.<sup>75</sup>

At this point he stops, in case he should be suspected of flattery. Manasses' romance, *Aristander and Kallitheia*, is fragmentary.<sup>76</sup> No evidence survives as to why it is written in political verse.

The doubly attributed astrological poem mentioned above, and one vernacular Ptochoprodromic poem,<sup>77</sup> are also dedicated to patrons in return for gifts. Here there is no mention of specific commissions. In the latter case, Ptochoprodromos seems to regret that he can provide nothing suitable for John Comnenos but a few political verses. In this way he implies contempt for the poem, but also seems to hint that there is something appropriate in making such a gift to an Emperor:

What shall I give you, Master, my Emperor and Master, what kind of recompense or favor am I to present to you, equal to your Majesty's splendid beneficences of every kind to me? For some time now and for a short period I have had nothing, in my wretchedness, to bring before you, equivalent to your power and goodness, your majesty and graciousness,

<sup>75</sup> Ἐπεὶ γοῦν ἐπεπόθησας οἵα τροφίμη λόγου  
εὔσυνοπτόν σοι καὶ σαφῆ γραφὴν ἐκτεπονθῆναι,  
τρανῶς ἀναδιδάσκουσαν τὰς ἀρχαιολογίας,  
καὶ τίνες ἡρξαν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς καὶ μέχρι τοῦ προῆλθον  
καὶ τίνων ἔβασιλευσαν, ἐτῶν δὲ μέχρις πόσων,  
ἡμεῖς ἀναδεόμεθα τὸ βάρος τοῦ καμάτου,  
καὶ δυσχερές καὶ ἐπαχθές τὸ πρᾶγμα, καὶ ἐργῶδες·  
παραμυθοῦνται γάρ ἡμῶν τοὺς ἐν τοῖς λόγοις μόχθους  
οἱ μεγαλοδώριαι σους καὶ τὸ φιλότιμόν σου,  
καὶ τὸν τοῦ κόπου καύσωνα καὶ τῆς ταλαιπωρίας  
αἱ δωρεαὶ δροσίζουσες κενούμεναι συχνάκις

(Bonn ed., vv. 7–17).

<sup>76</sup> Ed. O. Mazal, WByzSt, IV (Vienna, 1967).

<sup>77</sup> Eds. Hesselink and Pernot, *op. cit.*, 30–37 (Poem I).

except again some unmetrical political verses, modest, playful, but not shameless. For old men too play games, but with more self-control.<sup>78</sup>

There is another didactic astrological poem in political verse, dedicated by John Kamateros to Manuel Comnenos.<sup>79</sup> The *Poem on Fasts* of the Patriarch Loukas Chrysoberges,<sup>80</sup> a reworking of that of Nicholas Grammatikos to be discussed later, gives at first the impression that it has been composed for a lady of the imperial family. In the first line he addresses a ψυχὴ βασίλισσα,<sup>81</sup> whose entreaties have compelled him to write against his better judgment. But the end of the poem and its superscription agree in saying that the dedicatee was a member of the Patriarch's own family.

The twelfth century, as we have said, saw several experiments in the writing of the Greek vernacular. It is worth pointing out that all were written in the political verse and within the orbit of the court. The four poems of the Ptochoprodromic corpus all fall under these definitions.<sup>82</sup> The *Poem from Prison* of Michael Glykas<sup>83</sup> is a plea to Manuel Comnenos to release him from an unjust punishment. The text of the *Spaneas* poem fluctuates so freely, particularly in its crucial first lines, that it will probably never be certain who were the original giver and recipient of its sage advice.<sup>84</sup> The most likely pair, however, seem to be John II and his eldest son Alexios. The most interesting lines in this group all come from Ptochoprodromos: the phrase, quoted above, again linking playfulness to political verse; satirical comments on those who assume that political verse and simple language are a guarantee of sincerity;<sup>85</sup> and a poem telling all the secrets of a monastery in a form and language apparently appropriate to an illiterate monk.<sup>86</sup>

One other piece of evidence must be included before analysis returns to Tzetzes and the pressures at work on him. It is linked to the rest of these pas-

<sup>78</sup> Τί σοι προσοίσω, δέσποτα, δέσποτα στεφηφόρε,  
ἀνταμοιβήν δποίανδε ἡ χάριν προσενέγκω  
ἔξισωμένην πρὸς τὰς σάς λαμπράς εὐεργεσίας,  
τὰς γινομένας εἰς ἐμὲ τοῦ κράτους σου παντοίας;  
πρὸ τίνος ἥδη πρὸ καιροῦ καὶ πρὸ βραχέος χρόνου,  
οὐκ εἴχον οὖν, δ δύστηνος, τὸ τί προσαγγεῖν σοι  
κατάλληλον τῷ κράτει σου καὶ τῇ χρηστότητί σου,  
καὶ τῇ περιφανείᾳ σου καὶ χαριτότητί σου,  
εἰ μὴ τινάς πολιτικούς ἀμέτρους πάλιν στίχους,  
συνεσταλμένους, παίζοντας, δὲλ' οὐκ ἀναισχυντῶντας,  
παίζουσι γάρ καὶ γέροντες, δὲλλὰ σωφρονεστέρως

(*Ibid.*, vv. 1–11).

<sup>79</sup> Ed. L. Weigl (Leipzig-Berlin, 1908).

<sup>80</sup> Ed. Lampros, *op. cit.*, 198–212. See also J. Koder, "Das Fastengedicht des Patriarchen Nikolaos III Grammatikos," *JÖB*, 19 (1970), 206, 236–40.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. the same words in Manasses' Σύνοψις Ἰστορική, v. 3, and four times in the Prodromos/Manasses astrological poem (as in note 74 *supra*), vv. 1, 7, 358, 565.

<sup>82</sup> Eds. Hesseling and Pernot, *op. cit.*

<sup>83</sup> Ed. E. T. Tsolakis, Στίχοι οὓς ἔγραψε καθ' ὃν κατεσχέθη καιρόν (Thessaloniki, 1959).

<sup>84</sup> For the range of editions and collations from apparently irreconcilable manuscripts, see Beck, *Volksliteratur* (as in note 7 *supra*), 108. Beck's discussion of authorship (105–7) severely weakens the attribution to John II (cf. J. Schmitt, "Über den Verfasser des *Spaneas*," *BZ*, 1 [1892], 316–32); but no better solution is proposed.

<sup>85</sup> Eds. Hesseling and Pernot, 38–39 (Poem II): MS H, 1–19c; MS G, 1–19.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 48–71 (Poem III).

sages only by date, for it is socially and geographically very far from the imperial court. Around 1180 Neophytos Enkleistos wrote his Πεντηκοντακέφαλος βίβλος<sup>87</sup> near Paphos in Cyprus. The work itself is mainly in prose, in a language which reflects the Saint's informal education. It contains a few political verses, which he calls στίχοι ἀπλοϊκοί—simple verses—saying that they are written with λέξει ἀπλοϊκῇ καὶ προφορᾷ δρομαῖα—simple language and fluent expression—for penitential use.<sup>88</sup> They contain many synizeses.<sup>89</sup> The first poem, Neophytos seems to suggest, should be learned by heart.<sup>90</sup> The second, about the Fall of Man, should frequently be repeated.<sup>91</sup> It contains this passage:

The exile laments for everything, the exile weeps for everything, the exile always mourns, and has no consolation.<sup>92</sup>

The text explains the source of these lines.<sup>93</sup> Neophytos had met a man singing a song beginning with the vernacular line:

When shall I go back to my own, when shall I return?<sup>94</sup>

and continuing with the lines quoted above. The man told his story as a sort of parable, in which the two terms of reference are the estrangement of man from Paradise, and the departure of a great king's son from his father's court. The effect is a bewildering combination of the religious purpose of Neophytos with the later vernacular genre of laments for exile<sup>95</sup> and with a typical Byzantine romance, in which a young prince quarrels with his father and leaves to seek his fortune.<sup>96</sup> It is not safe to build any conclusions on so slight a piece of evidence; but this is a reminder of how biased the surviving texts may be because they are based almost exclusively on Constantinople.

The demotic experiments and Neophytos' lines provide perspective for several direct sneers which Tzetzes lets fall about political verses. In connection with them he refers conventionally to various muses: περιπέλια<sup>97</sup>—pedestrian, πανδῆμος<sup>98</sup>—common, and ἀγύρτις<sup>99</sup>—vagabond. He removes from a second text

<sup>87</sup> The text seems not to have been edited in full. Evidence for the following paragraphs is drawn from I. P. Tsiknopoulos, 'Η Ποιητική Παραγωγὴ τοῦ Ἐγκλείστου Ἀγίου Νεοφύτου, in Κυπρ.Σπουδ., 16 (1952), 41–49.      <sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.      <sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>90</sup> Ταῦτα δὲ φέρων ἀπὸ καρδίας τὰ ῥήματα... (*Ibid.*, 46).

<sup>91</sup> Ἡς καὶ συχνάκις μνημονεύειν προστίκει καὶ ἀποφθέγγεσθαι τάδε (*Ibid.*, 46).

<sup>92</sup> "Οτι δέ ξένος πάντα θλίβεται, δέ ξένος πάντα κλαίει,  
δέ ξένος πάντοτε θρηνεῖ, παραμυθίαν οὐκέ ξέων..."

(*Ibid.*, 47, vv. 33–34).

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 48–49.

<sup>94</sup> Πότε νὰ ύπάγω ἐτὶ τὰ ἔμα, πότε νὰ ἐπαναλύσω (*Ibid.*, 48).

<sup>95</sup> Bibliographical information is collected by Beck, *Volksliteratur*, 191–92. Add M. Mentzou, *Der Bedeutungswandel des Wortes "Xenos"* (Diss. Hamburg, 1964).

<sup>96</sup> This is a major motif, for example, in *Belthandros and Chrysantza*, *Phlorios and Platzia-Phlora*, and *Imberios and Margarona*, all ed. E. Kriaras, Βυζαντινὰ Ἰπποτικὰ Μυθιστορήματα (Athens, 1955).

<sup>97</sup> *Hermogenes Paraphrase* (as in note 60 *supra*), ed. Walz, 684.4; ed. Cramer, 34.1.

<sup>98</sup> *Scholia in Aristophanem* (as in note 19 *supra*), 955.2; cf. συγγράμμασιν... πανδῆμους ἐννοίας, *ibid.*, 933.10.

<sup>99</sup> "Iambi," ed. Leone (as in note 64 *supra*), poem 1, v. 2. The word ἀγύρτις plainly had connections for Tzetzes with oral poets: see *Historiae*, XIII, 218–67, particularly the passage on οἱ παρ' ἡμῖν σιγνοφόροι (239–50). The same word had provoked the often-quoted remark of Arethas of Caesarea on "Paphlagonians" who knocked at his door and sang, begging for money: see S. B. Kougeas, *Aἱ ἐν τοῖς σχολίοις τοῦ Ἀρέθα λαογραφικαὶ εἰδήσεις*, *Laographia*, 4 (1913–14), 239–40.

of the *Historiae* jokes ἴδιότιδος μούσης καὶ ὀγοραῖος<sup>100</sup>—of the uneducated and vulgar muse—which he had written in the first copy. The political verses themselves are called παιγνιώδεις<sup>101</sup>—playful—as we have seen, and also πανδήμοι<sup>102</sup>—common, and (καθ-)ἡμαξευμένοι<sup>103</sup>—an adjective apparently combining the ideas “rustic” and “trite.” The phrase quoted above, “in the offscourings of kitchen talk,”<sup>104</sup> is not an accurate description of the fairly correct but relaxed language in which Tzetzes writes his *Odyssey Allegories*; but it provides an indication of the author’s attitude toward his work. Most intriguing and baffling is a single political line quoted in Tzetzes’ Aristophanes scholia as κάπηλον, ὀγοραῖον, ἀσωτίας καὶ ἀναιδείας ἀνάμεστόν τε καὶ βάρβαρον<sup>105</sup>—rascally, common, full of profligacy and shamelessness, and barbarous. The quotation is inspired by the sentiments of Strepsiades in the *Clouds*, when he contrasts the old patriotic songs with the products of decadent modern taste.<sup>106</sup> Tzetzes is moved to quote an example of twelfth-century decadence. It is obviously an extract from a vernacular song. The sense, however, is not so apparent. Unless I am missing some subtlety, perhaps an obscenity, the line reads, “The hands of the tangled-fleeced one are to bury the sardine.”<sup>107</sup>

If one reviews all the evidence for twelfth-century political verse, the conclusion seems to me almost inevitable that it was then in common use for the vernacular language at an informal level which has left very few traces of its existence. The connection with the vernacular is shown, for example, by Tzetzes’ sneers, by Eustathios’ unexpected remarks about synizesis, by the anecdote of Neophytos, and by the exclusive use of this verse for the vernacular experiments of the century. The popularity of this meter enabled Tzetzes to defend himself by saying that it was πρεπώδης for his audience, and persuaded him to use it when his more serious work failed. Just as nobody would now dispute the fact that Demotic Greek, bearing a surprising degree of resemblance to the modern language, was spoken in Constantinople in the twelfth century and before, so there is, I think, little more reason to doubt the existence at that date of the vernacular political verse as a major medium of expression for the illiterate and half-literate members of Greek society—verse written, spoken, and sung by them and for them. The cultural censorship of the educated Byzantine mind seems to have been even more successful in preventing the writing down of popular verse than in preserving the written purity of the language in general.

But this is not the whole story. The situation is confused by another pressure, indistinct at present, but to be focused more sharply as the argument progresses. The commissions given to Tzetzes and Manasses, and the apology

<sup>100</sup> Scholion to *Historiae*, IV, 779.

<sup>101</sup> See note 174 *infra*.

<sup>102</sup> *Scholia in Aristophanem*, 1079.92.

<sup>103</sup> *Historiae*, IX, 275; *Scholia in Aristophanem*, 933.10.

<sup>104</sup> See note 55 *supra*.

<sup>105</sup> *Scholia in Aristophanem*, 598.21.

<sup>106</sup> *Clouds*, 966–72.

<sup>107</sup> Τὰ χέρια τοῦ κλωστόμαλλου νὰ θάψουν τὴν τζερδέλαν: *e carmine populari sumptum, ut videtur; sensus non liquet* (*Scholia in Aristophanem*, ed. Holwerda, 598.21).

at the beginning of the first Ptochoprodromos poem, suggest that political verse was somehow specially appropriate in poems addressed to members of the imperial family. Whatever the reason, it is a fact that a very high proportion of works examined here were so dedicated. The resolution of this apparent contradiction, the combination of low educational status with high social level, will be a major theme of the rest of this paper.

The next two works to be considered may coincide in date around the year 1100. One, the *Dioptra* of Philip the Monk,<sup>108</sup> is dated securely to 1095–97. The other, a poem on fasts, is attributed in most manuscripts to Nicholas, who is sometimes called Patriarch of Constantinople. The most likely candidate is Nicholas III Grammatikos (1084–1111), who may have written in 1107 or soon after.<sup>109</sup>

The *Dioptra* has an introduction, perhaps one of the last works of Michael Psellos,<sup>110</sup> which begs potential readers to ignore the barbarism of Philip's style and to concentrate on the sense. Philip himself claims to have written only at the insistence of the monk Kallinikos, since he had no confidence in his own ability. As if to prove that his claim is more than an example of the humility-topos, Philip places two letters at the head of the text, one from Kallinikos urging him to write, the other his own reluctant consent (pp. 11–12). After the letters come verses of apology (pp. 12–13), marked as insincere by an ironical δῆθεν in the heading of the published manuscript, but quite consistent with the attitudes shown in the rest of the work, particularly its conclusion:

An ignorant writer for ignorant readers, I speak as best I can, and give advice and encouragement to the best of my ability. I write for all, monks and laymen, who are uneducated like myself in speech and learning; not for the educated or the learned, nor for the wise rhetoricians or teachers. I have no fear at all of the fierce struggles which must be fought by many men who are inordinately proud. For I speak and think truly what I am.<sup>111</sup>

At the end of Book IV of the published text<sup>112</sup> (probably the conclusion of one of the two works of which it is composed), Philip returns to the themes of his purpose and his literary inadequacy. Addressing himself to “All those who read

<sup>108</sup> Ed. S. Lauriates, in ‘Ο Αθως, 1 (1920), 9–264.

<sup>109</sup> Ed. Koder (as in note 80 *supra*).

<sup>110</sup> A. Sonny, “Das Todesjahr des Psellos und die Abfassungszeit der Dioptra,” *BZ*, 3 (1894), 602–3.

<sup>111</sup> ‘Ο ἀμαθής πρὸς ἀμαθεῖς, ἐξ ὁν ἰσχύω λέγω  
καὶ νοῦθεν καὶ παραινῶ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν μοι,  
καὶ κοσμικούς καὶ μοναστάς ὑπομιμήσκω πάντας  
τοὺς ἴδιώτας κατ’ ἐμὲ τῷ λόγῳ καὶ τῇ γνώσει,  
οὐ μέντοι γε πρὸς γνωστικούς οὔτε μὴν πρὸς λογίους  
οὔτε πρὸς βήτορας σοφούς οὔτε πρὸς διδασκάλους,  
οὐ μὲν τῷσι οὐδὲ δέδοικα τοὺς ἐκ σκαμμάτων ἄθλους,  
οὐδὲ διφλισκάνουσι πολλοὶ φρονοῦντες ὑπέρ μέτρον  
ἀληθῶς γάρ ὅπερ εἰμι καὶ λέγω καὶ δοξάζω.

<sup>112</sup> Pp. 224–29; for the likely existence of two independent works in this text, see V. Grumel, “Remarques sur la Dioptra de Philippe le Solitaire,” *BZ*, 44 (1951), 198–211.

my rustic verses . . .,”<sup>113</sup> he reaffirms that the impulse to write the book came originally from Kallinikos. He explains that the authority for all his statements derives from the books of the Bible. Starting from these:

I changed the words and made the composition easy to grasp, readily understood, clear, and full of precision. Their difficult passages I have made simple for all, the problems I have made easy to understand. For I have paraphrased them into political verses, rustic, completely graceless, and shapeless, because I am completely inexperienced in literature. My words may be uneducated, but my understanding is not.<sup>114</sup>

He ends with words which are far from clear and logical in the text as edited:

If I have made any mistake, as an uneducated man, in the construction and composition of the lines here, knowing nothing of their meter I wrote in political verse. Yet I beg the pardon of those who find pleasure in them [verses in more conventional meters?]. Let nobody condemn me, let nobody deride me, but pay attention to the sense and meaning of the book, if you seek to find spiritual benefit.<sup>115</sup>

The insistence here on lack of education and directness of communication, the exclusion of political verse from respectable literature, in fact the opposition made between that verse and meter, all confirm evidence already examined. They make this one of the most significant texts for the history of this verse.

Nicholas Grammatikos on fasts is much less interesting. He too claims that he was persuaded to write against his will, but he supports his claim with much less circumstantial detail than Philip. In most manuscripts the work is said to have been composed at the insistence of the *protos* of Mount Athos.<sup>116</sup> Nicholas makes the usual claims for clarity and comprehensiveness, and of his own boorishness and lack of literary skill (1–24). Toward the end he announces his completion of the request made to him, with every sign of relief, and apologizes again at some length for his inadequacy (405–16). Thus he gives only slight confirmation to the conclusion one may draw from the *Dioptra*,

<sup>113</sup> Όσοι δύναγινώσκετε τούς ἀγροικούς μου στίχους (p. 224).

<sup>114</sup> Τάς δέ γε λέξεις ἡμειψα καὶ εὐληπτόν συνθήκην

εύσύνοπτόν τε καὶ σαφῆ καὶ πλήρη εύφραδείας,

τὰ τούτων δὲ δυσνόητα, εύνόητα τοῖς πᾶσι,

τὰ δύσκολα πεποίηκα εὔκολα τοῦ νοεῖσθαι.

Εἰς στίχους γάρ πολιτικούς μετέφρασσα ταῦτά γε,

ἀγροικούς καὶ παντελῶς ἀκαλλεῖς καὶ ἀμόρφους,

ὅτι γραμμάτων ἀπειρος τυγχάνω ὡς ἐπίπταν·

οἱ λέξεις ἴδιωτικαὶ οὐχ οὔτως δὲ ἡ γνῶσις . . . (p. 224).

<sup>115</sup> Εἰ δέ τι καὶ παρέσφαλον, ὡς ἀπειρος,

εἰς τὴν συνθήκην ἐνταυθοῖ καὶ συμπλοκὴν τῶν στίχων,

τὸ μέτρον τούτων ἀγνοῶν πολιτικῶς ἐφράσθην,

λοιπὸν συγγνώμην ἔξαιτῶ τοὺς ἐντρυφῶντας τούτοις·

μηδεὶς μου κατασέμψηται, μηδεῖς με μυκτηρίσῃ

δὲλλ’ εἰς τὸν νοῦν προσάγετε καὶ δύναμιν τοῦ λόγου,

εἴπερ Ἰητεῖτε ψυχικὴν δφέλειαν εὐρέοσθαι (pp. 228–29).

<sup>116</sup> Ed. Koder (as in note 80 *supra*), 208, 236–40.

that the connection between the political verse and the poorly educated dates back beyond 1100.

The other conclusion which was drawn from the twelfth-century evidence, the connection of the political verse and the imperial family, may be extended back into the eleventh century by examination of the writings attributed to Michael Psellos. Most of his works in political verse were addressed to emperors. Two, an elementary grammar<sup>117</sup> and a work on the Psalms,<sup>118</sup> are inscribed to Constantine IX Monomachos. Most of the rest were written while Psellos was the mentor and confidant of Constantine X Doukas and tutor to Michael VII Doukas Parapinakes. Three didactic poems are dedicated to Michael in the manuscripts, one on the instructions of Constantine.<sup>119</sup> Two others share with these three a didactic tone and imperial vocatives like ἄναξ, αὐτοκράτωρ, and στεφηφόρε. <sup>120</sup> Only two poems, one on the Mass,<sup>121</sup> apparently addressed to priests, and a Hexaemeron,<sup>122</sup> which seems to have survived only in part, do not fit this pattern.

Psellos uses the political verse only for simple introductory works to a variety of subjects relevant to his imperial pupils—rhetoric, law, grammar, and several religious points. These works are as devoted to clarity as are those of Tzetzes. As well as using incidentally many adverbs stressing clarity, he describes his work directly with adjectives like εύσύνοπτος and εύθηρατος<sup>123</sup>—comprehensible and accessible. His approach to the subject matter is to be σύντομος but πληρέστατος<sup>124</sup>—concise but very thorough. His language, he says, is ἔτοιμον εἰς κατάληψιν καὶ πρόχειρον εἰς γνῶσιν<sup>125</sup>—readily grasped and easily understood. Elsewhere he claims that he writes ἐν ἀπλουστέραις λέξεσιν καὶ κατημαξευμέναις<sup>126</sup>—in rather simple and trite (rustic) language—foreshadowing the wording later to be used by Tzetzes.

There are further parallels in the attitudes of Psellos and Tzetzes toward their imperial patrons. Like Tzetzes in the *Theogony*, Psellos in his *Commentary on the Song of Songs* is plainly answering a specific question from Constantine or Michael: what pious conclusions may be drawn from that difficult book? The question is stated and answered in summary form in a brief final passage marked ‘Επίλογος:

<sup>117</sup> Ed. J. Boissonade, *Anecdota Graeca*, III (Paris, 1831), 200–28.

<sup>118</sup> Ed. Lampros (as in note 74 *supra*), 352–84: two poems apparently addressed to Constantine Monomachos. The first also ed. E. Kurtz and F. Drexel, *Michaelis Pselli Scripta Minora*, I (Milan, 1936), 389–400, as addressed to Michael Doukas. The argument here depends on the imperial status of the dedicatees, not their identity which is plainly in doubt.

<sup>119</sup> Περὶ Δόγματος, PG, 122, cols. 811–18; Περὶ Νομοκανόνος, *ibid.*, cols. 919–24; Σύνοψις τῶν νόμων ... Πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα Καίσαρα Μιχαήλ τὸν Δοῦκαν, ἐκ προστάξεως τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ βασιλέως, *ibid.*, cols. 925–74.

<sup>120</sup> Εξήγησις εἰς τὸ Ἀσμα τῶν Ἀσμάτων, *ibid.*, cols. 539–686; Περὶ Ῥητορικῆς, ed. Walz, *Rhetores Graeci*, III (1834), 687–703.

<sup>121</sup> Ed. P. Ioannou, “Aus den unedierten Schriften des Psellos; das Lehrgedicht zum Messopfer,” *BZ*, 51 (1958), 3–9.

<sup>122</sup> Eds. Kurtz and Drexel, *op. cit.*, 401–10.

<sup>123</sup> E.g., Περὶ Ῥητορικῆς, 703.28; Σύνοψις τῶν νόμων, col. 925.7.

<sup>124</sup> Περὶ Δόγματος, col. 816.16.

<sup>125</sup> Σύνοψις τῶν νόμων, col. 974.6.

<sup>126</sup> Εξήγησις εἰς τὸ Ἀσμα τῶν Ἀσμάτων, col. 540.7.

Your command has been fulfilled, my lord. See, the Song of Songs has come to an end. But you ask, my powerful, or rather my learned, master, what in purity may be derived from this prophetic book of Songs.<sup>127</sup>

After a brief answer to this question, Psellos adds:

I, your majesty, as servant of your power, wishing to fulfill your commands, have expressed the meaning of the Song, its explanation and judgment, as best I can in political verse.<sup>128</sup>

There is a close parallel to the end of the main section of the *Theogony* (719–22).

Psellos' work *On the Ascriptions of the Psalms* ends with another parallel to Tzetzes' approach in the *Theogony*:

I have made an introductory summary of this matter, my lord, and have brought it now to you majesty as an appropriate gift. I have revealed no discovery of any depth, for David is nothing other than Eternal God, and every psalm is God's voice, and every melody is a soothing of the soul. But I have said nothing of this: I have collected many brief and obvious points and expressed them all in brief, clear language. But if you pluck higher grades of psalmody in your heart, I too will mount in concert with your progress, and will write for you the ineffable expression of the Psalms.<sup>129</sup>

As Tzetzes in the *Theogony* promises a much better treatment of the same subject upon request, so Psellos promises to go beyond the ascriptions of the Psalms to treat of their real significance.

The only work I know in this meter by a contemporary of Psellos is a short treatise *On Subjunctive Verbs*,<sup>130</sup> whose most likely author is Niketas of Serrai.

<sup>127</sup> Ἐχεις τὸ σὸν ἐπίταγμα πεπληρωμένον, ἄναξ.  
Ἴδου γάρ τέλος εἰληφε τὸ τῶν ἀσμάτων Ἀσμα,  
ἀλλ' ἔρωτᾶς ὡς κράτιστε καὶ πλέον φιλολόγε,  
καὶ τί τὸ συναγόμενον ἐν καθαρῷ τυγχάνει  
ἐκ ταύτης τῆς προφητικῆς ἀσματογράφου βίβλου  
(Ἐπίλογος, 1–5).

<sup>128</sup> Ἡμεῖς δὲ τὸ ἐπίταγμα τὸ σὸν, δὲ στεφηφόρε,  
ἀποπληρῶσαι θέλοντες ὡς δούλοι τοῦ σοῦ κράτους,  
πολιτικοὶ ἐφράσαμεν ὡς δυνατόν ἐν στίχοις  
τὴν τῶν ἀσμάτων δύναμιν, ἔχηγησιν καὶ γνῶσιν  
(Ἐπίλογος, 14–17).

<sup>129</sup> Ταῦτ' εἰσαγωγικώτερον, ἄναξ, σοι συνοψίσας  
δῷρον νῦν προσαγγήσοχα οἰκεῖον, στεφηφόρε,  
ζῆτημα μὲν βαθύτερον μηδὲν δινακαλύψας·  
οὐδὲν γάρ ἔτερον Δαβὶδ ἢ θεός δὲ πρὸ πάντων,  
καὶ πᾶς ψαλμὸς θεοῦ φωνὴ καὶ πᾶσσα μελῳδία  
ψυχῆς ἔστι κατάστασις. Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα σιγήσας  
τὰ σύντομα καὶ πρόχειρα καὶ πολλὰ συναθροίσας  
συντόμῳ πάντα καὶ σαφεῖ ἔχηγησάμην λόγῳ.  
Εἰ δέ γε τοὺς διναβαθμούς ψάλλεις ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ,  
κάγὼ συναναβήσομαι πρὸς τὰς σάς ἐπανόδους  
καὶ γράψω σοι τὴν ἄρρητον τῶν ψαλμῶν θεωρίαν.

<sup>130</sup> (Eds. Kurtz and Drexel, *op. cit.*, vv. 290–300; cf. Lampros [as in note 74 *supra*], 360–61).  
Ed. Lampros, *ibid.*, 192–96.

This poem is attributed to Tzetzes in its only complete edition, while other manuscripts point to Psellos himself. But the best manuscript, and the poor quality of the versification, tip the balance in favor of Niketas.<sup>131</sup> The poem's main interest is in the history of education, for its second half is a description of competitive σχεδογραφία, written in terms of a horse race. But the most useful passage for present purposes is the beginning, which stresses the playful connotations of political verse in a tone that will be recognized by any schoolmaster who has taught late on Friday afternoon:

Come, let us amuse ourselves a little in political verses, a consolation in sickness and in faintheartedness. Let these be about subjunctive verbs, for this is the only topic which we have not examined.<sup>132</sup>

One more line may be added to the corpus of mid-eleventh-century political verse. According to Cedrenos-Skylitzes, one of the last straws which drove Isaac I Comnenos to arrest Michael Kerularios was a “vernacular and trite (rustic) threat” which the Patriarch had made against him:

I set you up, you oven, and I shall pull you down.<sup>133</sup>

This does not form a perfect political line, but is very close. The term καθημαξευμένος which Skylitzes uses, taken in conjunction with the use of that word by Psellos and Tzetzes, suggests that the historian was aware that his words could almost be formed into a political verse.

There are two eleventh-century comments to report from the generation before Psellos. Niketas Stethatos, in his biography of his revered master Symeon the New Theologian, says that Symeon “composed the *Loves of Divine Hymns* in a meter which was no meter.”<sup>134</sup> He means that Symeon’s hymns were all written without regard for quantity, in the political line and other rhythmic meters. Niketas knew the hymns well, for he seems to have prepared them for publication. John Mauropos, however, one of Psellos’ teachers, was an opponent of accentual verse. In a poem directed “against those who compose unsuitable verse,” he makes the comment:

A meter which is no meter I shall never call a meter.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>131</sup> Wendel (as in note 12 *supra*), cols. 2005–6.

<sup>132</sup> Φέρε μικρόν τι παιζώμεν πολιτικοῖς ἐν στίχοις  
τῆς νόσου παρηγόρημα καὶ τῆς μικροψυχίας,  
περὶ ρήμάτων δὲ ἔστωσαν αύθυποτάκτων οὗτοι.  
τοῦτο γάρ ἀνεξέταστον ἔστι τὸ μέρος μόνον (1–4).

<sup>133</sup> Τὸ δημῶδες τοῦτο καὶ καθημαξευμένον ἐπιλέγων “ἔδε σε ἔκτισα, φοῦρνε· ἔδε θνα σε χαλάσω.” Cedrenos, Bonn ed. (1839), II, 643.11–13.

<sup>134</sup> Τῶν θείων ὄμνων τοὺς ἔρωτας ἐν ἀμέτρῳ μέτρῳ συνέταπτε: ed. I. Hausherr, *OC*, 12 (1928), 50: chap. 37.12.

<sup>135</sup> Μέτρον δὲ ἀμέτρον οὐδαμῶς μέτρον λέγω: eds. I. Bollig and P. de Lagarde (Göttingen, 1882), 19 (Poem 34, Πρὸς τοὺς ἀκαίρως στιχίζοντας, line 5). This whole poem is a play on the meaning of the word μέτρον (meter, or measure in general). Mauropos is thus able tacitly to equate the decline of metrics with the decline of civilization as a whole.

There is no certain trace of the political verse before the tenth century.<sup>136</sup> Thus, in dealing with those who use it during that century, we must in some sense be examining pioneers. But the nature of their innovation is in doubt. Was one of them himself creator of that rhythmic pattern, or perhaps a learned adaptor who read a line of Aristophanes or Aeschylus and decided to revive in rhythmical terms a quantitative meter which had long ago died out? Are these tenth-century writers followers of an earlier creator or adaptor whose work is now lost? Or are they innovators only in the use of pen and parchment, the first to write down lines of a meter which had existed orally before? In an attempt to answer these questions, our survey will include all tenth-century examples, although they will contribute little direct information as to why the meter was used.

Although the hymn had been the most fertile area for Byzantine metrical experiment, it is difficult to cast Symeon the New Theologian in the role of innovator. I should assume that the creator of a meter would show some special sensitivity to that meter and to others. In fact, Symeon is very loose in his use of all three of the metrical forms he employs.<sup>137</sup> His eight-syllable verse, which should have a "trochaic" accentuation, constantly slips into the "iambic" pattern appropriate to the first half of the political verse. The twelve-syllable verse is regular, by the canons established by Maas, at the verse-end and before the less common of the two possible caesuras. But at the more common caesura it is variable, following neither Maas's rule nor any other. The fifteen-syllable political verses have numerous faults due to insertion and omission of syllables, especially where Symeon puts together two eight-syllables or two seven-syllables instead of the regular pattern of eight plus seven. More than one poem slips from one meter into another. The general impression left is of a man without metrical sophistication, who is allowing his inspired verses to fall from his lips in whatever shape they may. Even if his work were the earliest example of the political form, it would be difficult to claim that Symeon had invented it. He must surely have been using meters which were already common before he wrote.

So strong is this impression that I find it difficult to credit Symeon even with increasing the length of poems in this verse. He uses it in thirty-nine hymns and for more than five thousand three hundred lines, of which nine hymns have more than two hundred consecutive political verses. This massive body of work dwarfs the ten or so other surviving tenth-century examples. The only

<sup>136</sup> The word "certain" is chosen to exclude three categories of evidence which must be regarded as uncertain: 1. The list of doubtful cases on pp. 170–71 *infra*. 2. Undated poems, particularly religious alphabets, for which a case may be made for earlier dating (p. 175 *infra*). 3. *Digenis Akritas*, which probably includes pre-tenth-century material. Though it is likely that this material survived in the same political verse form as the extant *Digenis*-Romance, the nature of this evidence will always prevent it from being used to extend the history of the verse. Good discussions and bibliographical summaries on relevant historical and textual points may now be found in A. Pertusi, "La poesia epica bizantina e la sua formazione," in *Atti del Convegno Internazionale sul tema: La Poesia Epica e la Sua Formazione*, 1969, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei (Rome, 1970), 481–549; L. Politis, "L'épopée byzantine de Digenis Akritas. Problèmes de la tradition du texte et des rapports avec les chansons akritiques," *ibid.*, 551–81.

<sup>137</sup> See Koder's edition of the Hymns (as in note 11 *supra*), 82–94.

other serious use of the political line in hymns comes in the Ἐξαποστειλάρια of Constantine Porphyrogennetos,<sup>138</sup> which have four lines out of seven in this meter in each of eleven strophes. The longest passage of consecutive political verse is the penitential poem of Nikephoros Ouranos,<sup>139</sup> Symeon's contemporary. This is an alphabet, with three lines for each letter, making seventy-two in all, held together by the rigid brace of the alphabetic construction. My subjective impression is that Symeon must have had much longer and less structured models for his hymns. His choice of the political verse for lengthy poems suggests to me the existence of similar long poems before him, for there are precedents of long works in both the other meters which he employs.

Two penitential alphabets seem to date from the tenth century, one under the name of Ouranos, as we have seen, and the other of Symeon Metaphrastes.<sup>140</sup> They come from a tradition of alphabetic poems in several different meters, perhaps originating in a poem of Gregory of Nazianzus.<sup>141</sup> This tradition as a whole is hostile to innovation; there is nothing but the meter to separate these two poems from those which had gone before. In fact, as will be explained, it is not even certain that these are the earliest penitential alphabets to use the political line. This seems to me a genre more likely to follow the metrical fashion than to lead it.

The oldest surviving political verses are probably those found in the *Book of Ceremonies*.<sup>142</sup> They can only be dated as earlier than the death of Constantine VII in 959. But when they are mentioned for the first time, only the first two of the four verses are quoted, followed by the words καὶ τὰ λοιπά, καθώς ᾧ συνήθεια ἔχει—and the rest, as the custom is. A song which was part of the usual ceremonial before 959, and is fully accepted by the conservative and knowledgeable Constantine Porphyrogennetos, is likely to have been composed before 912, and thus to be the earliest surviving example of the meter. The song is a χορευτικόν or dance-song welcoming the spring, to be sung at the Ἰπποδρόμιον Μακελλαρικόν, the “Hippodrome of the Butchers,” linked in the text of the *Book of Ceremonies* to the Roman Lupercalia.<sup>143</sup> It has been suggested that this Byzantine festival preserved more than the name of its pagan predecessor, for there were certain parallels in the ceremonial.<sup>144</sup> The song falls clearly within another tradition, that of calendar poems for spring, which appears

<sup>138</sup> Eds. W. Christ and M. Paranikas, *Anthologia Graeca Carminum Christianorum* (Leipzig, 1871), 110–12.

<sup>139</sup> Ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Βυζαντινά Ἀνάλεκτα, *BZ*, 8 (1899), 66–70.

<sup>140</sup> PG, 114, cols. 132–33.

<sup>141</sup> PG, 37, cols. 908–10. See D. N. Anastasijewić, “Alphabet,” *BZ*, 16 (1907), 479–501.

<sup>142</sup> “Ιδε τὸ ἔαρ τὸ καλὸν πάλιν ἐπανατέλλει

φέρον ὑγίειαν καὶ χαρὰν καὶ τὴν εὐημερίαν

(Bonn ed. [1829], 366.9–11).

“Ιδε τὸ ἔαρ τὸ γλυκὺ πάλιν ἐπανατέλλει,  
χαρὰν ὑγίειαν καὶ λωτὸν καὶ τὴν εὐημερίαν,  
ἀνδραγαθίαν ἐκ Θεοῦ τοῖς βασιλεῦσι Ρωμαίων  
καὶ νίκην θεοδωρητὸν κατὰ τῶν πολεμίων

(*Ibid.*, 367.19–21).

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 364.8.

<sup>144</sup> V. Grumel, “Le commencement et la fin de l’année des jeux à l’Hippodrome de Constantinople,” *EO*, 35 (1936), 428–32.

from ancient times to the twentieth century. In spite of its lack of swallows, it is usually included among the χελιδονίσματα by modern Greek critics.<sup>145</sup> The song would thus seem quite safe from the suspicion of metrical experiment; this traditional genre, the archaizing pressures of a pre-Christian festival, and the general conservatism of the whole court ceremonial combine to guarantee its conventional nature.

The remainder of tenth-century political verse is contained in a series of imperial laments. The earliest of these are three of a group of four poems published by I. Ševčenko from the margins of the Skylitzes Matritensis, poems which he dates convincingly to "before 913(?)".<sup>146</sup> Since they commemorate the death of Leo VI (912), they presumably were not written long before 913. Within the same genre, and dated still more securely to 931, are two of a group of three epitaphs on Christopher, eldest son of Romanos Lecapenos.<sup>147</sup> Next comes the fourth poem from the Skylitzes manuscript, written in 959 on the death of Constantine Porphyrogennetos, probably by Symeon Metaphrastes.

Several points may be made about these six poems. First, each is datable with some accuracy only because it must have been written at a time fairly close to the death which it laments.<sup>148</sup> Second, at least one and probably all three of the poems for Leo VI were intended to be sung, for the first has a modal signature and an heirmos (also presumably part of a political verse, and older than 912!).<sup>149</sup> Third, only the two Christopher poems are completely in political verse; the others have refrains of seven or eight syllables at intervals. Fourth, like the spring song, they maintain the connection between the political verse and the court. Finally, these poems are remarkably conventional products. Ševčenko points out a number of parallels between them in a discussion of attribution,<sup>150</sup> setting them up as an objection to his dating of the poems. But a disturbing number of similar parallels may be found to later laments in fifteen-syllable verse from differing dates and social levels.<sup>151</sup> Rather

<sup>145</sup> E.g., N. G. Politis, Δημώδη Βυζαντινά ἔσματα, *Laographia*, 3 (1912), 649–50; P. Koukoules, Βυζαντινῶν Βίος καὶ Πολιτισμός, I,ii (Athens, 1948), 10. See also S. Baud-Bovy, "Sur le χελιδόνισμα," *Byzantina-Metabyzantina*, 1 (1946), 23–32, for the continuity from Athenaeus to Rhodes in the twentieth century.

<sup>146</sup> "Poems on the Deaths of Leo VI and Constantine VII in the Madrid Manuscript of Scylitzes," *DOP*, 23–24 (1969–70), 222–25.

<sup>147</sup> L. Sternbach, "Appendix Christophorea," *Eos*, 5 (1899), 7–21.

<sup>148</sup> Ševčenko's arguments (*op. cit.*) begin with the common nature of all dirges, but then vary from poem to poem: the Leo VI poems show a favorable attitude to the Emperor Alexander, surprising if they were written after his fall from power; Christopher's death would have ceased to have importance by the time of his father's death in 944, if not earlier; the Constantine VII poem has exact knowledge of the birth dates of the imperial family, which would be unlikely if the writer were not a contemporary.

<sup>149</sup> Ševčenko, *op. cit.*, 201, 205–7, 227–28, carried a little further by J. Koder, "Der Fünfzehnsilber am kaiserlichen Hof um das Jahr 900," *Byzantinoslavica*, 33 (1972), 215–16.

<sup>150</sup> *Op. cit.*, 223–24.

<sup>151</sup> Parallels have been collected here from a limited number of texts, and always from passages containing laments or descriptions of laments. References: *Digenes Akrites*, ed. E. Trapp (Vienna, 1971) (cited *infra* as *Digenis*, with MS or version symbol and line); *Belthandros and Chrysanta* and *Imberios and Margarona*, ed. Kriaras (as in note 96 *supra*), 87–130, 199–249; poems on the death of Michael Palaeologos, ed. D. J. Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), 382–83 (cited *infra* as *Michael*); another imperial lament, ed. E. Miller in *Manuelis*

than using them to attempt attribution, it might be better, as Ševčenko himself proposes, to account for them, “by the identity of subject matter and of the stylistic canon, and by the requirements of the genre, which will not have changed much within a half-century.”<sup>152</sup> Even the preliminary evidence collected here is enough to support a suggestion that the poems belonged to a tradition which preserved its clichés for many centuries. This is poor soil for metrical experiment. A world-wide corpus of poetry written on the deaths of monarchs and their children would contain few experiments, metrical or otherwise. These six poems would surely not be among them.

Since texts in which political verse has certainly been identified give no clues to the existence of a creator of the meter, we must go back beyond the tenth century to examine earlier suggested cases. This list will recapitulate, and in some cases supplement, that given by Koder in his brief survey of the verse and its origins.<sup>153</sup>

First, there is an attempt by S. P. Kyriakides to find another group of political verses in a wedding song of the *Book of Ceremonies*.<sup>154</sup> J. B. Bury tried to arrange the words of Symeon Magister’s description of the altercation between

*Philae Carmina*, II (Paris, 1857), 378–79 (cited *infra* as *Philes*). Ševčenko’s poems are cited *infra* by Roman numeral and line number, and Sternbach’s “Christophorea” as *Chr.*

I.1: Δότε μοι θρήνους ἄδοντι ρεῦσαι πηγὰς δακρύων; cf. *Philes*, 1: τίς μοι δανείσει δάκρυα καὶ στεναγμούς καὶ θρήνους

I.5: τί μοι στυγνάλεις ἥλιε, τί ζοφερὸν δύνισχεις; I.8: τί μοι, σελήνη, ἔοικας νυκτὶ μελανωμένῃ; I.11: τί μοι καὶ πόλος ἄναστρος ἀπὸ νεφῶν σπιλάδος; IV.18: “Ἥλιε, τάς ἀκτίνας σου κρύψων ἐκ τῆς ἡμέρας; cf. *Michael*, 10–11: “Ἥλιε, κρύψων σου τὸ φῶς καὶ σύστειλον ἀκτίνας” / νεφέλαι, συγκαλύψατε τὸ πλάτος τὸ τοῦ πόλου; *Digenis*, G, VIII, 216–18: δὸς ἥλιε, ζοφώθητι, κρύψων σου τὰς ἀκτίνας, / σελήνη, μελανώθητι, μήκετι δάδουχήστης, / αἱ τῶν ἀστέρων ἄπασαι σβέσθητε φρυκτωρίαι.

II.35: τὸ φῶς τῶν ὄφθαλμῶν μου; IV.41: φῶς τῶν ἐμῶν ὄμμάτων; cf. *Digenis*, G, VII, 128 (= Z, 3970): ποῦ δὲ τὸ φῶς τῶν ὄφθαλμῶν; G, VIII, 69: καὶ φῶς τῶν ὄφθαλμῶν μου; Z, 4118: φῶς τῶν ἐμῶν ὄμμάτων; *Imberios*, 191: Υἱὲ μου, φῶς τῶν ὄμματιῶν.

III.33: τὸν συμπαθῆ καὶ ἡσυχὸν κλαύσαστε καὶ οἱ λίθοι; cf. *Digenis*, G, VII, 148 (= Z, 3988): πεποίηκεν, ὡς λέγεται, καὶ τοὺς λίθους θρηνήσαι; Z, 4426–27: ώς καὶ τὰ δένδρα μοι δοκεῖ, διοῦ δὲ καὶ οἱ λίθοι, / καὶ ἀπαντά τὰ ἐρπετὰ κλαύσασθαι σύν ἑκείνοις.

IV.5: Βουνοὶ καὶ δρη κλαύσαστε σύν ἡμῖν τὸν δεσπότην; *Chr.*, III, 19–20: “Ορη, βουνοὶ καὶ φάραγγες, ρήξατε θρηνώδιας; *Belithandros*, 129: “Ορη καὶ κάμποι καὶ βουνά, λαγκάδια καὶ νάπαι, / κάμε νῦν συνθρηνόσατε . . .”

IV.22: ναὶ, στέναλε πᾶσα κτήσις; *Chr.*, III.1: “Απασα κτῆσις πένθησον; cf. *Digenis*, G, VIII, 215: θρήνησον, πᾶς ὁ κόσμος; *Michael*, 12: καὶ πᾶσα κτήσις πένθησον.

IV.24: Ιδοῦ γάρ σκῆπτρα θρόνοι τε τάφον οὐ δυσωποῦσιν; *Michael*, 7, 9: τὸ στέφος, τὸ διάδημα, σύν δλουργίδι εἴφος / . . . καὶ πρὸς τὸν τάφον ἔδραμεν.

IV.26: τὸν πόλεις ἔδαφίσαντα μικρὸς πῶς κρύπτει λίθος; cf. *Digenis*, G, VIII, 264: . . . ἀρτίως δὲ ὑπὸ μικροῦ κατακρατεῖται τάφοι.

There are other such parallels and numerous less striking verbal clichés in these passages and in other similar laments. More examples have been collected by V. Tiftixoglu, “Digenes, das ‘Sophro-syne’-Gedicht des Meliteniotes und der byzantinische Fünfzehnsilber,” *BZ*, 67 (1974), 56–57.

Ševčenko notes parallels between poems from the same century, which seem to share the same function and sociological level. The parallels collected here are less numerous, but they span a wide temporal and sociological range; furthermore, they are usually from laments over the loss of a loved one rather than for the death of a monarch, which gives them greater weight. It seems to me that Ševčenko is raising an unnecessary objection to his own argument, indicating the pervasive existence of clichés in a tradition rather than the common authorship of the poems. His dating stands. The existence of the tradition will be discussed later.

<sup>152</sup> *Op. cit.*, 225. On this genre, see M. Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge, 1974), whose case for continuity between the classical and modern periods might be strengthened by consideration of these texts.

<sup>153</sup> “Der Fünfzehnsilber.”

<sup>154</sup> Γαμήλιον δημῶδες βυζαντινὸν δόμα, *AIPHOS*, 11 (1951), 179–83.

Theophilus and Cassia at the Emperor's bride-show to form two political lines, one for each of the protagonists.<sup>155</sup> Krumbacher found a few political lines in the proverbs which are frequent in the pages of John Klimax and John Moschos.<sup>156</sup> Krumbacher and others have also pointed to the satirical song, apparently a political verse in trochaic rhythm, sung against the Emperor Mauricius.<sup>157</sup> M. Paranikas stressed the claims of religious poetry to have produced the earliest political verses.<sup>158</sup> The first line of each strophe of Romanos' kontakion τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ τῶν ἔθνῶν...<sup>159</sup> is a perfect political verse, while the second and third lines produce two slight variations on the regular form. There are also the Τροπάρια τῆς Μετανοίας,<sup>160</sup> part of the Sunday morning office of the Triodion, of indeterminate but probably early date, composed completely in political verse. D. S. Robertson found a surprisingly strong case for reconstructing a political line in Procopios' *Secret History*, at a point where Theodora ridicules an elderly patrician.<sup>161</sup> N. G. Politis thought that the earliest political line was a single unit of the *\*Ἀκτα Καλοποδίου*, an acclamation of Justinian's reign preserved in Theophanes.<sup>162</sup> Finally, one must mention a number of single trochaic tetrameters preserved by Plutarch, most of them comments, satirical or otherwise, on Roman generals.<sup>163</sup> Though the pattern of their stress-accents resembles that of the political line, none is in fact a perfect example.

In none of these cases is the identification of the political line certain. Sometimes doubt arises from the number of changes needed in the text, sometimes from the possibilities for pure coincidence in a form like the kontakion which combines many different metrical patterns. Even if some or all of these verses were authentic political lines, they would provide no knowledge of an act of original creation. They do, however, suggest two possible lines of descent for the innovation—the hymn, and the satirical song and acclamation. Both these suggestions unfortunately raise more problems than they solve. The kontakion and the kanon are fundamentally different from the political verse in that they respond by strophes and not by lines. Most surviving satirical songs and acclamations, though they fall into short blocks which suggest a rhythmic base, show no regular pattern either of lines or of strophes. Both forms, while they may include the occasional political line, seem unlikely to have fostered the

<sup>155</sup> *A History of the Eastern Roman Empire (A.D. 802–867)* (London, 1912), 81–82, especially 82 note 2 and his previous work on the subject there listed. For further comment see I. Rochow, *Studien zu der Person, den Werken und dem Nachleben der Dichterin Kassia*, Berliner Byzantinistische Arbeiten, 38 (Berlin, 1967), 5–19, and Ševčenko, *op. cit.*, 226 note 89.

<sup>156</sup> *Mittelgriechische Sprichwörter* (as in note 7 *supra*), 225–35, severely criticized by S. G. Mercati, "Pretesi Versi Politici in Giovanni Climaco e Giovanni Mosco," *BZ*, 33 (1933), 32; less hostile criticism by Koder, "Der Fünfzehnsilber," 216 note 14.

<sup>157</sup> See pp. 187–89 and note 242 *infra*.

<sup>158</sup> Περὶ τοῦ πολιτικοῦ στίχου τῶν Βυζαντινῶν, *IRAIK*, 2 (1897), 185–90.

<sup>159</sup> Eds. P. Maas and C. A. Trypanis (Oxford, 1963), 34–41. See Paranikas, *op. cit.*, 187–89.

<sup>160</sup> Paranikas, *op. cit.*, 189.

<sup>161</sup> "Procopius, *Hist. Arc.* xv. 25–35," *CR*, 57 (1943), 8–9.

<sup>162</sup> Δημώδη Βυζαντινὰ ḥσματα (as in note 145 *supra*), 637 note 1. On this text, see now P. Karlin-Hayter, "Les *\*Ἀκτα διὰ Καλοπόδιου*," *Byzantium*, 43 (1973), 84–107, and her forthcoming article (in *Festschrift Marcel Richard*) on the original form of the *\*Ἀκτα*.

<sup>163</sup> Henrichsen, *op. cit.* (as in note 7 *supra*), 46. The lines are found in the following *Lives* of Plutarch: *Sulla*, 2; *Pompey*, 27; *Cato Minor*, 73; and perhaps even *Demosthenes*, 20.

development of whole poems in political verse, with their monotonous repetition of the same fifteen-syllable shape. Without further evidence, one must attribute isolated political lines appearing in these forms to coincidence, or perhaps to the competing pressure of other political-verse poems in another tradition for which no direct evidence has survived.

The lack of an innovator, both at the beginning of the history of the meter and in its apparent prehistory, is not an issue to be treated lightly. Maas, unquestionably the greatest exponent of Byzantine metrical studies, sums up the situation in these words: "The centuries after Justinian were a period of utter decline for Byzantine metric. The only important event is the introduction of the so-called 'political metre'...from the acclamations into literature."<sup>164</sup> This statement does an injustice to the later developments in hymnography, but it is not an absurd exaggeration, either of the conservatism of Byzantine poetry or of the importance of the single exception. In seven or eight centuries of general decadence there appeared apparently only one striking experiment, which succeeded so magnificently that it produced a popular form still alive today. Yet this study has found no trace of a poet who made the innovation, nor of a date or place at which he made it. This conclusion makes me distrust any proposed model for the origin of this verse which demands an act of creation.

There has been much discussion as to whether the genesis of the political verse was at a popular or a learned level in Byzantine literature and society. The studies which are most generally accepted, those of S. P. Kyriakides and of S. Baud-Bovy,<sup>165</sup> tend toward a popular origin. They have now been rendered rather obsolete by the publication of much new tenth-century material, and by the mapping of developments in the early surviving verse which give clues to its likely pre-literary form. Rather than attempting a detailed exposition and criticism of their theories, this paper will set out an alternative thesis, and leave comparisons to the reader.

The two most recent comments are those of L. Politis and Koder,<sup>166</sup> both of whom stress that the arguments which they have published so far are merely foretastes of more detailed studies to be presented later. Politis has abandoned an earlier hope that the genesis was popular. "Je ne crois plus à l'origine populaire du vers."<sup>167</sup> Koder agrees, with extreme caution.<sup>168</sup> Politis wishes, for metrical reasons which will be discussed later, to propose the thesis that the political line is a composite verse, made up of an eight-syllable line with the

<sup>164</sup> Greek Metre (as in note 3 *supra*), 18.

<sup>165</sup> Kyriakides, Τὰ παιδιά τοῦ δεκαπεντασυλλάβου, in 'Ημερολόγιον τῆς Μεγάλης Ἑλλάδος (Athens, 1923), 417–33, and *idem*, 'Η γένεσις τοῦ διστίχου καὶ ἡ δρχὴ τῆς ἴσομετρίας, *Laographia*, Παράρτημα, 4 (1947). Baud-Bovy, *La chanson populaire grecque du Dodécanèse* (Paris, 1935), 39–122 (see also H. Grégoire's review in *Byzantion*, 12 [1937], 650–58, especially 653–55, in which he briefly broaches the idea that forms the basis for the second half of this paper), and *idem*, "Sur la strophe de la chanson 'cleftique,'" *AIPHOS*, 10 (1950), 53–78.

<sup>166</sup> Politis, "L'épopée" (as in note 136 *supra*), 560–63; Koder, "Der Fünfzehnsilber."

<sup>167</sup> "L'épopée," 562.

<sup>168</sup> "Der Fünfzehnsilber," 219.

addition of the seven-syllable unit which ends most Byzantine twelve-syllables. The act of combination, he seems to suggest, was made by a learned Byzantine writer at some time before the date of the earliest surviving political verse. It is dangerous, as well as unfair, to express an opinion on a proposal which has been only half explained, and I may be forced to change my mind when I see Professor Politis' full arguments. But I must confess that I will find it difficult to accept this model of metrical innovation without clear demonstration of the identity of the innovator and some trace of the poems in which the innovation was made. A unique moment of post-Justinianic metrical creativity demands an unusual degree of supporting evidence.

This study will propose a different solution to the problem of origins. The argument will begin with two discussions aimed at the establishment of criteria by which to judge a proposed solution. The first is a brief reexamination of the material presented above, including undated items which could not be used in a historical survey, and redirecting attention from works which are explicit about their authors' purposes to examine others which are significant only in numbers. In this way I hope to suggest areas of Byzantine society through which the meter was transmitted. The other criteria will be metrical. By examining the studies of Koder and Politis on the visible development of the meter from its first appearance until the end of Byzantium, it is possible to attempt backward projections to a hypothetical earlier form. These two criteria must form a major part of the evidence against which any solution for this problem must be tested.

When one attempts to arrange the surviving corpus of political verse by genre rather than in a chronological framework, the perspectives change a little. The long works by men like Tzetzes and Psellos lose their prominence, which results from the prestige of their authors and the direct insights which they give into motives for the use of the verse. The remaining poems cluster around four poles of attraction. On closer examination, I think, these reduce themselves to two, the same tension noted before between high social level and low literary status.

The first pole of attraction is the least obvious, but that which has been most discussed in this paper so far. There is good evidence, at least from the time of Tzetzes onward, that vernacular political verse existed at an oral level in the Byzantine world, and had an influence on the more formal work which has survived. Quotations cited above from the *Dioptra* suggest that this situation already existed at the end of the eleventh century. There are earlier indications to the same effect from the beginning of that century in the work of Symeon the New Theologian. In view of the lack of an act of creation to mark the beginning of the verse, it seems to me a tenable, if unprovable, point of view that vernacular examples of this verse could have been heard before the writing of any of the surviving texts. The first nexus of poems is thus composed of those influenced by the vernacular.

The second pole is concerned with education. Most of the works discussed in the chronological survey have some educational purpose. Some, like Psellos'

didactic poems to imperial pupils, are directly concerned with the imparting of information in the teacher-student relationship. But there exists a particular class of educational poem in which all literary considerations are sacrificed to a determination to impart information in an easily assimilable form. The result is a verse text which would seem more appropriate in the form of lecture notes, a table, or a list. These remarks would apply, for example, to Psellos' elementary grammar, and to Tzetzes' Περὶ μέτρων. It would be pointless to attempt a complete list, since there can be few verse genres where the worthlessness of the material is so effectively combined with inaccessibility and difficulty of attribution. One can easily find, however, an anonymous grammar and a schedographical lexicon published by Boissonade,<sup>169</sup> and a collection of other lexica assembled by E. Miller.<sup>170</sup>

The verse form here seems absurdly unsuitable for the material. There are, I think, two clear reasons for its use. The first has been mentioned before: any teacher has to maintain the impression of his own competence by the educational standards of his society. But if those standards include the use of a high style, with many difficult words and obscure forms, there is a danger that his lessons may only be intelligible to the fully educated. The political line provides an escape from the impasse. By using a genre without classical models, a teacher may with impunity select simple vocabulary and structure appropriate to his half-educated pupils.

The other reason is explained most clearly in the introduction to the schedographical lexicon:

I shall not write down the words simply, without verses, but I will give their orthographies clearly and harmoniously. I shall make up each verse of fifteen syllables, so that we may learn them by heart as comfortably as possible.<sup>171</sup>

The orthographical information scattered among the glosses in this lexicon is explained verbally, without reliance on the written word. The same comment applies even to one of Miller's lexica which is concerned with the orthography of rough and smooth breathings.<sup>172</sup> It seems quite clear that pupils were expected to learn these hundreds of lines by heart, and to mutter them through until they reached the information which they were seeking.

Yet pleasure was supposed to enter somehow even into this most mechanical of teaching methods. The anonymous author of the grammar published by Boissonade can speak of "mixing seriousness with play, in political verses."<sup>173</sup> I should like to suggest that the constant use of παιγνιον and παιγνιωδης—play

<sup>169</sup> Grammar: *Anecdota Graeca* (see note 117 *supra*), II, 340–93; Lexicon: *ibid.*, IV, 366–412.

<sup>170</sup> "Lexiques grecs inédits," *Annuaire de l'Association pour l'encouragement des études grecs en France*, 8 (1874), 222–84, and *idem*, with M. A. Pappadopoulos, *ibid.*, 10 (1876), 121–36.

<sup>171</sup> Οὐ μήν δὲ γράψομεν ἀπλῶς τὰς λέξεις δίχα στίχων  
ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐναρμόνιον σαφῶς ὄρθογραφήσω,  
εἰς δεκατέντε συλλαβῆς τὸν στίχον περιπλέξω,  
ὅπως ἀποστηθίζομεν ὡς εύμαρῶς τῇ φύσει (19–22).

<sup>172</sup> *Op. cit.*, *Annuaire de l'Association*, 8, pp. 225–37, and 10, pp. 122–24.

<sup>173</sup> σπουδὴν παιγνίων κεραυνός, πολιτικοῖς ἐν στίχοις (11).

and playful—in connection with political verse is a clue to the nature of the oral vernacular verse whose existence I have postulated.<sup>174</sup> Whatever its other characteristics, it must have been in part a literature of entertainment. The existence of this vernacular verse is confirmed, in my opinion, by the choice of this meter for works to be learned by heart. Mnemonics are plainly more effective if expressed in a simple, familiar rhythm. There is an obvious connection between memory and oral literature; what could be more likely to stimulate the memories of young pupils than the meter usually employed for oral entertainment?<sup>175</sup>

The third class of verse produced in this meter is the religious. The most striking examples are the hymns of Symeon the New Theologian, the *Dioptra*, the Τροπάρια τῆς Μετανοίας in the liturgy of the Triodion, and the didactic verse on religious themes written by Psellos. But here, too, there are a number of poems in a narrowly defined and possibly functional tradition which may be at the heart of the religious use of the meter. Two tenth-century penitential alphabets have been discussed above. Anastasijewić publishes six others in political verse, none of them securely dated.<sup>176</sup> One is attributed to Athanasios the Great; another to Leo VI; others to Niketas the Metropolitan of Klaudiopolis, Makarios Kalorites, and Kyriakos Magister. While the attribution to Athanasios must be false, Krumbacher is certainly rash in denying authorship to Leo VI, for whose death the earliest dated political verses were written.<sup>177</sup> It is difficult to rule out even the only known Niketas of Klaudiopolis, whose name is recorded at the Council of 787.<sup>178</sup> The major argument used against these attributions is a simple assertion that this verse was not in use until later. These alphabets, like the imperial laments published by Ševčenko, are full of clichés of phrase and idea. Anastasijewić attempts to use these clichés to establish a chronological order among the poems, assuming that the parallels are the result of direct influence between the surviving texts.<sup>179</sup> Again, it is more credible to see at work the pressures of a traditional genre, operating too subtly and involving too many lost texts to permit reconstruction. I should like to suggest to those who are expert in matters of liturgy and penance that these alphabets may have had a practical role in which memorization played a part.

Around this tightly-knit group of alphabets revolves a looser genre of poems with a similar penitential theme, often in the form of a dialogue between the soul and the body. The *Dioptra* is the best example, but a considerable list of others is given by Anastasijewić.<sup>180</sup> Perhaps its most surprising item is a group of three poems attributed to Planudes. One may speculate on the reasons

<sup>174</sup> As well as the passage just quoted, there are Tzetzes, *Theogony*, 499, 722, and *Odyssey Allegories*, Proemion, 40; Ptochoprodromos, I, 10–11; Niketas of Serrai (as in note 130 *supra*), 1; Psellos, Περὶ Πητορικῆς, 703.30.

<sup>175</sup> For the only likely competitor, church music, see note 66 *supra*.

<sup>176</sup> “Alphabetē” (as in note 141 *supra*).

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 489; pointed out by Ševčenko, *op. cit.* (as in note 146 *supra*), 227 note 93.

<sup>178</sup> Anastasijewić, *op. cit.*, 482.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 482–83, 484, 485.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 479–82.

which impelled him to overcome the repugnance for the meter which he shows in the *Dialogue on Grammar*. He may have aimed these poems at a less educated audience than he expected for his work in a higher style, and hoped that they would be learned by heart. I would prefer to think that he would have felt a twinge of hypocrisy if, as a monk, he had expressed penitence for his sins in polished hexameters. There is a satirical remark in the Ptochoprodromic corpus about those who assume that simple language and political verse are a guarantee of sincerity,<sup>181</sup> but sincerity must have been more difficult to convey in an accurate classical meter.

These, then, are three of the four poles by which political verse poems seem to be attracted—the vernacular, the educational, and the religious. I would suggest that the latter two are merely developments of the former. Educational and religious poems were written in this meter because it was a good means of communication to the half-educated, a way of stimulating the memory, and a medium which gave an impression of sincerity. All these characteristics are the result, I would say, of its status as the meter of vernacular poetry at an oral level.

The fourth pole is quite different. To read the inventory of the Mangana-codex Marcianus Graecus XI 22, as given by Papadimitriu,<sup>182</sup> is to enter a world very far removed from vernacular oral poetry. Prodromos, or whoever was the author of the works in that manuscript, is a court poet, writing for the court about subjects of interest to the court. The occasions for the poems are landmarks in the history of the empire or in the lives of the imperial family. Sometimes the poet includes his own special interests by making a petition or expressing thanks on behalf of the monastic community of the Mangana;<sup>183</sup> but the poems are almost all addressed to the emperor or to a member of his family. The sentiments expressed are as traditional and as mindless in their adulation as are the religious alphabets in their expressions of penitence. The meter is almost invariably the political verse. A similar type, perhaps even more artificial and restricted, may be found in the poetry of Manuel Philes, written nearly two centuries later.<sup>184</sup> Most of his poems are in iambics, but there are a few scattered pieces of political verse, not, as might be expected, addressed to those of lower social status than the iambics. With one or two exceptions, the emperor himself is either the addressee or the subject of poems in the political verse. As we have seen before from the commissions of imperial ladies, and from the words of Ptochoprodromos, there seems to be a definite link between the political line and the imperial house.

I should like to divide these court poems into two groups. The first is a functional core, which I believe to have been traditionally associated with and

<sup>181</sup> See notes 72 and 85 *supra*.

<sup>182</sup> Ο Πρόδρομος (as in note 71 *supra*), 104–12.

<sup>183</sup> The poems referring to the Mangana ἀδελφῶν have now been edited by S. Bernardinello, *De Manganis* (Padua, 1972).

<sup>184</sup> Ed. Miller (as in note 151 *supra*), especially I, 294–306, 379–80, 419–30, 451–52, 457–60; II, 375–79, 393–97; ed. A. E. Martini, *Atti della R. Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti di Napoli*, 20 (Suppl.) (1900), esp. 18–19, 110–14.

expressed in the political line. The second group is much larger in number, attracted into the same meter by a similarity of subject-matter, though not sharing the same function. The first group are adulatory hymns to the emperor and his family, to be sung on behalf of the δῆμοι<sup>185</sup> of the Hippodrome in the court ceremonial. The clearest surviving examples date from the twelfth century, but, as I shall show, earlier extant texts shared this ceremonial purpose. From this functional origin, I would suggest, it became customary to express in political verse almost anything addressed to a member of the imperial family.

The best-known group of songs written for the demes is made up of two tripartite songs, one for Christmas and the other for Epiphany. Both are addressed to John II Comnenos. They were published twice as poems of Theodore Prodromos,<sup>186</sup> then independently as anonymous hymns by poets of the demes.<sup>187</sup> Their connection with the Hippodrome is made by the last two words of their superscriptions, τοῖς δῆμοις. It is confirmed by the impersonal tone which excludes the begging found in many other poems of the Prodromic corpus. The same words τοῖς δῆμοις are added also to the titles of the third, fourth, tenth, and eleventh poems of the group published by Mai. The third and fourth are paeans for the demes at imperial weddings, the tenth was written for a triumphal procession of John Comnenos, and the eleventh is a request, in the person of the city, that the Emperor should seat himself in his triumphal chariot. One suspects that the first of Mai's poems was also τοῖς δῆμοις: the text describes the gathering of the whole city in the Hippodrome, and asks the Emperor to "shine kindly upon the δῆμοι with a gentle spirit."<sup>188</sup> The poem was composed for the crowning of Alexios, John's eldest son. The only other Prodromic poem I know with the heading τοῖς δῆμοις is addressed to John Comnenos himself as he was starting the races.<sup>189</sup>

A second group of later poems was collected by A. Heisenberg for his work on the πρόκυψις.<sup>190</sup> He begins with three late poems of the Prodromic corpus, written for performance at imperial weddings,<sup>191</sup> continues by publishing five

<sup>185</sup> On δῆμοι, I was able to profit from A. Cameron's iconoclastic article, "Demes and Factions," *BZ*, 67 (1974), 74–91, but not his subsequent book, "Circus Factions," which must include a more positive side of his thinking. In spite of his objections to the word, I can find no term less confusing than "deme" to describe the groups prominent in the *Book of Ceremonies* and, I believe, in the Hippodrome ceremonial of the Comnenian period. Cameron shows that in early texts δῆμος and δῆμοι are apparently interchangeable, and may both mean "people," even in the context of the Hippodrome, where one would expect the technical meaning "deme or faction." But all his Hippodrome examples are several centuries earlier than Constantine Porphyrogennetos. In this paper it will be assumed that δῆμοι and its cognates, applied in the twelfth century to the same Hippodrome ceremonies as are ascribed to the demes in the *Book of Ceremonies*, refer to the technical, not the general, meaning. Any extension of this principle in date or area will be carefully supported.

<sup>186</sup> Ed. A. Mai, *Nova patrum bibliothecae*, VI (Rome, 1853), 399–413; PG, 133, cols. 1339–92; in both cases, poems 12–14, 16–18.

<sup>187</sup> S. Lampros, Νέος Ἑλλ., 2 (1905), 385–95.

<sup>188</sup> Λάμπτετε δῆμοις εὐμενὲς ἀπὸ ψυχῆς πρασίας (I, 10).

<sup>189</sup> Ed. C. Walz, *Analecta Byzantina* (Inaug. Diss., Leipzig, 1910), 40.

<sup>190</sup> "Aus der Geschichte und Literatur der Palaiologenzeit," most conveniently available in his collected *Quellen und Studien zur spätbyzantinischen Geschichte* (London, 1973), 82–132.

<sup>191</sup> Ed. C. Neumann, *Griechische Geschichtschreiber und Geschichtsquellen im zwölften Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1888); C. Castellani, *Epitalamio di Teodoro Prodromo per le nozze di Teodora Comnena e Giovanni Contostefano* (Venice, 1888); and *idem*, *Epitalamio di Teodoro Prodromo per le nozze di Giovanni Comneno e... Taronita* (Venice, 1890).

poems with a similar function written by Nicholas Irenikos during the Nicene Empire, and ends with a discussion of twenty similar poems of Manuel Holobolos,<sup>192</sup> written after the recapture of Constantinople. He also mentions a description of an imperial wedding in unexpected vernacular language, dedicated to an Augusta. This has suffered unmerited obscurity, because it was originally published as an adjunct to a discussion of the illustrations in the manuscript.<sup>193</sup> All of the poems collected by Heisenberg are in political verse, and are *ex post facto* evidence for the connection of the political verse with the demes, since he claims that they were written for the ceremony which replaced that in which the demes had played a part. But they show that the ceremonial functions earlier performed by the demes continued to be carried out in political verse.

The publications of Mai and Heisenberg proved to be of particular value to historians of imperial ceremonial and its terminology, especially Treitinger and Kantorowicz.<sup>194</sup> These twelfth- to fourteenth-century texts show in full vigor several of the formal and verbal clichés of Hellenistic and Roman monarchical power, particularly the incessant image of the arrival of the emperor as the rising of the sun. They act as a bridge in the evidence for imperial ceremonial between Constantine Porphyrogennetos and Pseudo-Kodinos. But these are not the only political verses so used during this period. The Prodomic corpus will provide many more, though selection must be made with care. Many likely poems must be rejected as containing too much personal intervention by the author to have been part of public ceremonies, at least in the form in which they have survived. I will make no attempt at a selection here. From other sources one may add the following probable cases:

- 1) An alphabet addressed to Alexios I Comnenos by Stephanos Physopalamites, which has the sun image in its first line and a wish for the Emperor's long life in its last.<sup>195</sup>
- 2) A wedding song composed by Niketas Choniates for the wedding of Isaac II Angelos with Margaret, daughter of Bela III of Hungary (1186).<sup>196</sup> The ascription includes the words ἐπὶ ταῖς ἀναφωνήσεσι τῶν δήμων—for the acclamations of the demes.
- 3) Another wedding song for John Asen II of Bulgaria and his Byzantine bride.<sup>197</sup> The poem is accompanied by a letter, in which the author begs pardon for his presumption, but plainly expects some kind of reward for his composition. It seems that the ceremonial and its appropriate verse were adopted by at least one independent ruler under Byzantine cultural influence.

<sup>192</sup> Ed. Boissonade, *Anecdota Graeca*, V (Paris, 1833), 159–82, and M. Treu, "Manuel Holobolos," *BZ*, 5 (1896), 546–47.

<sup>193</sup> J. Strzygowski and S. Lampros, "Das Epithalamion des Paläologen Andronikos II," *BZ*, 10 (1901), 546–67.

<sup>194</sup> O. Treitinger, *Die Oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee* (Darmstadt, 1956); E. H. Kantorowicz, e.g., "Oriens Augusti—Lever du Roi," *DOP*, 17 (1963), 117–77.

<sup>195</sup> Ed. Walz (as in note 189 *supra*), 52–55.

<sup>196</sup> Ed. J.-L. van Dieten, *Niketae Choniatae Orationes et Epistulae*, CFHB, 3 (Berlin-New York, 1972), 44–46. See also his *Niketas Choniates, Erläuterungen zu den Reden und Briefen nebst einer Biographie*, Supplementa Byzantina, 2 (Berlin-New York, 1971), 92–95.

<sup>197</sup> Ed. I. Dujčev, "Prinosi Küm Istorijata ne Ivan Asienija II," *SpBAN*, 66 (1943), 163–64.

4) Three brief poems on the death of Michael Palaeologos, probably Michael VIII but possibly Michael IX, published from the Triklinian manuscript of Hesiod into which they have been bound.<sup>198</sup>

5) One poem of Manuel Philes for Christmas and Epiphany;<sup>199</sup> three others written on the deaths of emperors, found consecutively in a Paris manuscript and published as appendices to Miller's edition of Philes.<sup>200</sup> The first of the three is ascribed to Philes, and was written for the death of an Emperor Andronikos.

But perhaps the most significant additions to be made to the list of ceremonial poetry in the political verse are to be found in a Venetian codex published by Lampros.<sup>201</sup> Once again, in a long manuscript, the only political verses are addressed to the emperor and his family:

fol. 34<sup>r</sup> (pp. 36–37): Ἀνεπίγραφα δημοτικὰ εἰς αὐτοκράτορα.

fol. 36<sup>v</sup> (pp. 45–47): Εἰς τὸ βάπτισμα τῆς πορφυρογεννήτου κυρᾶς Ἀννης γεγονός κατὰ τὸ ὅγιον μέγα Σάββατον.

fol. 39<sup>r</sup> (pp. 57–59): Ἀνεπίγραφα δημοτικὰ εἰς Μανουὴλ τὸν Κομνηνὸν ἐπὶ τῇ Χριστοῦ ἀναστάσει.

fol. 119<sup>r</sup> (pp. 161–63): Δημοτικὰ ἀνεπίγραφα εἰς Μανουὴλ Κομνηνόν.

fol. 180<sup>v</sup> (p. 174): Ἀνεπίγραφα εἰς τὴν στέψιν Μανουὴλ τοῦ Κομνηνοῦ.

fol. 193<sup>v</sup> (pp. 187–89): Δημοτικὰ ἐπὶ τῇ προελεύσει τοῦ βασιλέως.

Each of these six blocks of material appears to be a single unit, although all but one are published with strophic divisions. All but the first contain the name Manuel, and may be dated provisionally toward the beginning of his reign. Greater precision is possible in some cases, but needs too much discussion to be attempted here.

The most important fact about these poems for present purposes is the word δημοτικός which appears in four of the six titles. This adjective, here used as a noun, is as ambiguous as its root, δῆμος. It can refer to δῆμος as the whole people, or in the special sense of deme of the Hippodrome. In view of the phrase τοῖς δήμοις reported above, the functional similarity of these poems with ceremonial Hippodrome verse, and the difficulty of applying to them the adjectives "popular" or "vernacular," I feel certain that the writer of these titles was marking a connection with the demes.

This use of δημοτικός, together with a sentence of Eustathios translated at the beginning of this paper, indicates that the use of this verse in the Hippodrome was perhaps its most conspicuous characteristic in the mid-twelfth century. Eustathios claimed that the verses called "political" in his day had only just received that name. The rest of his sentence is opaque, since it makes a formal contrast between the trochaic scansion of the verse in the past and its name at

<sup>198</sup> Ed. Geanakoplos (as in note 151 *supra*), 382–83.

<sup>199</sup> Ed. Miller (as in note 151 *supra*), I, 379–80.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 375–79.

<sup>201</sup> Marcianus 524, *Néos Ελλ.*, 8 (1911), 3–59, 123–92.

the time of writing—a contrast in which I can see no sense.<sup>202</sup> The anacoluthon may not be solved by finding something in the sentence which may meaningfully be contrasted with trochaic scansion. If a contrast is to be made, it must be between δημοτικός as an old name of the verse, and πολιτικός, the new name. Even without the framework of contrast, Eustathios is saying that verses described as δημοτικοί have just been named, or renamed, πολιτικοί. These terms are rather close in significance. I suggest that the best way to make sense is to accept an analogy with the Venetian manuscript, to take δημοτικός as referring to the demes, as against πολιτικός, city or everyday verse.

Moreover, it is possible to hang the change of name on a historical peg. The use of Blachernae as the imperial residence, which increased throughout the twelfth century, must have sapped the vitality of the Hippodrome ceremonies, which were closely linked to the Great Palace. The crisis was probably reached at about the date when Eustathios was writing, late in the reign of Manuel. To this period Heisenberg dates the introduction of the πρόκυψις, the most significant of Palaeologan imperial ceremonies, obviously designed to replace imperial appearances in the Hippodrome.<sup>203</sup> I know of no evidence that the demes survived to take part in the πρόκυψις. Is not Eustathios saying, therefore, that since the decline of the demes their “demotic” verse had acquired a name with wider connotations? This, I suggest, is much the most likely interpretation. But whatever his meaning, the connection of this verse with Hippodrome, demes, and emperor is secure.

It will be remembered that Tzetzes began his *Iliad Allegories* with a long address to Manuel's wife Irene as the moon, the mirror image to that of the emperor as the sun which is the most frequent cliché in this ceremonial poetry.<sup>204</sup> I hope that the reasons for his using this metaphor at the beginning of his work are now quite obvious, and also the motives of his imperial patronesses who imposed on him the use of the political verse. In the twelfth, thirteenth, and early fourteenth centuries it was regarded as the most appropriate medium for court poetry addressed to the emperor's family, because of its use, during the mid-twelfth century at least, as the verse of the demes in the court ceremonial. But what of its earlier history in that role?

During the eleventh century, the only pieces of evidence I know are the poems of Psellos and the insult of Michael Kerularios. Psellos may have chosen the meter for his educational poems as much for its appropriateness to his imperial pupils as for its usefulness in memorization. Kerularios may have felt a special bite in his vulgar line addressed to Isaac Comnenos because the meter

<sup>202</sup> καὶ δηλοῦσι τοῦτο φανερῶς καὶ οἱ δημοτικοὶ στίχοι οἱ τὸ παλαιόν μὲν τροχαϊκῶς ποδιζόμενοι καθά καὶ Αἰσχύλος ἐν Πέρσαις δηλοῖ, ἀρτὶ δὲ πολιτικοὶ ὄνομαζόμενοι. See note 9 *supra*. For the confusion likely to result from a conscientious attempt to understand this passage, see Henrichsen, *op. cit.* (as in note 7 *supra*), 19–21.

<sup>203</sup> For the use of Blachernae, see Heisenberg, *op. cit.* (as in note 190 *supra*), 84–85; R. Guillard, *Etudes de topographie de Constantinople byzantine*, Berliner Byzantinistische Arbeiten, 37 (1969), I, 545–50. The date of Eustathios' Homeric commentaries is set by van der Valk, *op. cit.* (as in note 9 *supra*), cxxxvii–cxxxix, in the range 1165–75. Heisenberg, *op. cit.*, 92–96, dates the introduction of the πρόκυψις to much the same dates.

<sup>204</sup> See, e.g., Irenikos, ed. Heisenberg, *op. cit.*, 102, vv. 68–71.

was close to that more commonly used for ceremonial eulogy. In the tenth century there is more evidence. The spring song of the *Book of Ceremonies* is to be sung responsively by the demes, and the wedding song from the same source, which Kyriakides hoped to scan as political verse, was to be sung by the demes as an imperial bride left her home.<sup>205</sup> Kyriakides' metrical and textual analyses may now be supported by a clearer knowledge of this genre two centuries later, though it must be admitted that they are still not fully convincing. There are also the imperial laments published by Sternbach and Ševčenko. All must have been written immediately after the deaths of the emperors concerned, and at least one of them was intended for performance as a song.<sup>206</sup> They involve no intrusion of their authors' personalities, and are composed with the same mindless, traditional adulation found in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century "deme-poems." Some shared clichés have been listed in note 151 *supra*. While the evidence is far from conclusive, would it be rash to suggest that they were written for performance by the demes in the Hippodrome?

There is nothing surprising in the lack of evidence for deme-poems in the eleventh century. It is quite clear that after the death of Basil II there was a progressive breakdown in the normal relationship between the emperors and the city population. Though violence and discontent in Constantinopolitan society might have stimulated the demes to activity, they were totally eclipsed by the guilds, which seem to have played a part in the downfall of four eleventh-century emperors.<sup>207</sup> It is equally to be expected that the ceremonial role of the demes would later be fostered by the Comneni. One may speculate that the new dynasty, to bolster its power against the guilds, would make use of any alternative channels of social and political expression.<sup>208</sup>

But the silence of the sources about deme-poetry from before the tenth century forms at present a much firmer obstacle to the further development of the suggestions made in this paper. Only one, or possibly two, songs from the *Book of Ceremonies* are in political verse, against the scores which are not. There are no clear examples dating from before 912. It seems that the clarification of the role of the verse in the twelfth-century court ceremonial has provided little further help in the quest for origins. But it must make us more sensitive to any evidence from before the tenth century which links a verse like the political to the Hippodrome and the demes, or to the emperor and his family. Any suggested origin not including such a link will leave a significant part of the evidence unexplained.

The second group of criteria by which to judge proposed origins will arise from a discussion of metrical developments within the political line. Here the

<sup>205</sup> See note 154 *supra*.

<sup>206</sup> See p. 169 and note 149 *supra*.

<sup>207</sup> See S. Vryonis, "Byzantine Δημοκρατία and the Guilds in the Eleventh Century," *DOP*, 17 (1963), 287–314.

<sup>208</sup> The demes still combined horse-racing with ceremonial: Theodore Balsamon (eds. G. Rhales and M. Potles, Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ιερῶν κανόνων [Athens, 1852–59], II, 357–60) notes the survival of stables, horses, and revenues belonging to the demes. His evidence extends this activity into the second half of the twelfth century.

work has been done by Koder,<sup>209</sup> and all that is necessary is to report his results, insofar as they are relevant and have been published, and to draw conclusions.

There are two areas of the political line in which clear development may be found from the earliest surviving verses to the end of the Byzantine period. The first is the position of the obligatory accent before the caesura. The earlier examples tend to have the accent on the sixth syllable rather than on the eighth, preferring a dactylic ryhthm at the end of the half-line to an anapestic ending (/- rather than --/).<sup>210</sup> Later writers choose the two forms more evenly, or even prefer the eighth-syllable anapestic accent. The second development occurs toward the beginning of both halves of the line. In verse that is dated early, an accent often falls on the third syllable of each half-line—syllables 3 or 11 of the whole line. Politis calls this accentuation “anapestic,”<sup>211</sup> but I should prefer to use Koder’s word “trochaic.”<sup>212</sup> In later texts this becomes so rare that it may be regarded as the infringement of a metrical rule. These developments are not infallible indices of date, nor even of the chronological order in which given poems were composed. As Ševčenko has pointed out,<sup>213</sup> Symeon the New Theologian is a good example of an early writer with the characteristics of a much later text. But it is certain that in both of the developments mentioned general progress is from the form described as early to that called late.

In the first case, that of the accent before the caesura, the imperial laments have an invariable rule. Of the two hundred and twenty-eight political verses in the texts of Ševčenko and Sternbach, not one has an anapestic ending. All have the dactylic accentuation on the sixth syllable. The Alphabet of Symeon Metaphrastes also follows this rule, and one other alphabet does the same, with very few exceptions.<sup>214</sup> The four lines of the spring song from the *Book of Ceremonies*, however, have three anapestic endings and only one dactylic. Symeon the New Theologian has approximately 60 percent dactylic to 40 anapestic. The anapestic percentage grows irregularly, to 52 percent for Holobolos, 63 percent for Philes, and 78 percent for Gennadios Scholarios in the fifteenth century. One would expect, therefore, that political verse before the tenth century would have preferred, perhaps exclusively, a dactylic ending to the first half-line, and thus a stress on the sixth syllable and not the eighth.

Koder’s statistics for the second criterium, the “trochaic” accentuation at the beginning of the half-lines, refer only to the beginning of the first half, and have not yet been extended to the second.<sup>215</sup> He reports about 5.4 percent for

<sup>209</sup> Reported in his edition of Symeon the New Theologian’s Hymns (as in note 11 *supra*), 87–93, and “Der Fünfzehnsilber.” Further analysis along the same lines has now been reported by Tiftixoglu, *op. cit.* (as in note 151 *supra*), 41–63.

<sup>210</sup> Koder, “Der Fünfzehnsilber,” 214.

<sup>211</sup> “L’épopée” (as in note 136 *supra*), 562.

<sup>212</sup> “Der Fünfzehnsilber,” 218.

<sup>213</sup> *Op. cit.* (as in note 146 *supra*), 225–26 note 83.

<sup>214</sup> That of Kyriakos Magister (ed. Anastasijewić, “Alphabete” [as in note 176 *supra*], 494–95) has three exceptions in forty-eight lines.

<sup>215</sup> “Der Fünfzehnsilber,” 217–18.

the Leo VI poems, 9 percent for Symeon Metaphrastes (Ševčenko's fourth poem and the Alphabet), 5.6 percent for Ouranos, 4.8 percent for Symeon the New Theologian, and so on. With a few exceptions, later poems have percentages below three. Only one exception is significant: the Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akritas*, which has 21.5 percent of the trochaic form. This manuscript is believed, almost unanimously, to represent the oldest surviving version of *Digenis*.<sup>216</sup> Some of the antecedents of the poem seem to go far back into the past. Could it not have preserved vestiges of an earlier form of the verse?

I should like to link this evidence of the trochaic accentuation to other examples of uncertainty between iambics and trochaics which have been seen above. Both Planudes and Eustathios seem in some doubt whether the origin of this verse was the trochaic or iambic quantitative tetrameter. Are they guessing, on the basis of the iambics and trochaics both found in ancient comedy? Or are they speaking from knowledge that the iambic rhythm of their own day had developed out of a trochaic predecessor? All this is confirmation for the view of Politis, that the political verse derived from the combination of an octosyllable with the seven-syllable second half of a twelve-syllable line. But it would be equal confirmation for any other solution which includes a trochaic ancestor among the progenitors of the verse. As I have already explained, I should prefer a theory which did not involve a unique act of metrical creativity.

Here, then, are the major criteria for judgment. The projections back from Koder's metrical studies call for a rhythm with a trochaic element and a preference for the dactylic ending over the anapestic. The analysis by genre of surviving political verses requires an origin which links popular and vernacular status to a special relationship to the emperor. There is a solution which meets these standards well, though it is far from perfect in other respects. It is time to describe it, to test it by the criteria established here, and to examine the chain of development by which it may have grown into political verse.

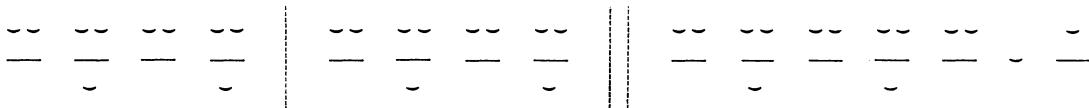
In the triumphal processions of Republican Rome, the soldiers of the victorious *triumphator* would sing verses insulting and ridiculing him. This was an apotropaic part of the ritual, a reinforcement of the message of the slave who rode behind him on the chariot, whispering into his ear constant reminders of his mortality. The meter of these songs was the *versus quadratus*, a trochaic septenarius which derived its name from its fourfold, in practice more usually threefold, division. The fourfold pattern can now only be seen from lines in early writers, particularly Plautus,<sup>217</sup> who were obviously influenced by the popular pattern. The threefold shape may be seen in several of the surviving triumphal songs, particularly the chants of the crowd who marched in A.D. 19 to the Capitol and woke Tiberius with the false news of the survival of Germanicus: *Salva Roma, salva patria, salvus est Germanicus*.<sup>218</sup> There is thus a

<sup>216</sup> See, e.g., Politis, "L'épopée," 558–65.

<sup>217</sup> Examples in E. Fraenkel, "Die Vorgeschichte des *versus quadratus*," *Hermes*, 62 (1927), 361–63.

<sup>218</sup> Suetonius, *Caligula*, 6,1.

regular division after the fourth foot of the septenarius, and usually another after the second. The result is a line basically consisting of fifteen syllabic units.<sup>219</sup>



Resolution seems to be limited as far as possible in the surviving lines to painless combinations of neighboring vowels, as in *patriā* above.<sup>220</sup> There is an almost invariable tendency for the word-accents to conform to the metrical ictus of the line,<sup>221</sup> which is a trochaic pattern of accents on the odd-numbered syllables of the basic unresolved line. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the pattern of the stress-accents, and therefore the limitation of the number of syllables, was as important to the improvisers of these verses as their quantitative metrical pattern. This fifteen-syllable trochaic shape was to be one of the basic patterns of the mediaeval Latin *rhythmus*. It could be described as a trochaic version of the Greek political line.

The *versus quadratus* is not restricted to triumphs. It may be used for political wit in situations where no triumph is in question: *postquam Crassus carbo factus, Carbo crassus factus est*,<sup>222</sup> in children's games: *rex erit qui recte faciet, qui non faciet non erit*;<sup>223</sup> and for riddles: *qui de nobis longe venio, late venio? solve me*.<sup>224</sup> But the essential connection of the verse with the triumph may be seen in its literary use to conjure up a triumphal atmosphere. When Horace wishes to imagine a triumph of Augustus, before writing *io triumphe!*, he puts *o sol pulcher, o laudande*,<sup>225</sup> the first half of a *versus quadratus*, although he has to span two lines of his ode to do so. Plautus in the *Bacchides* had probably made "a deliberate allusion to the kind of song which was customarily sung at a military triumph,"<sup>226</sup> in the line: *Ilio capto ut sit mulsum qui triumphent milites*, where the relevance of medium to substance is obvious.

In form and function, therefore, this is a promising solution to the problem of the origin of the political verse. The *versus quadratus triumphalis* is a meter with a trochaic rhythm. Its language is Latin, in which no polysyllabic word may have its stress-accent on the last syllable. Therefore there is an automatic

<sup>219</sup> See, e.g., F. Crusius and H. Rubenbauer, *Römische Metrik* (Munich, 1955), 72, for the basic septenarius pattern, modified here only by marking the common divisions of the *versus quadratus*.

<sup>220</sup> "Zunächst scheinen die sog. Auflösungen nicht selten vorzukommen, es muss aber bald auffallen, dass es sich dabei fast stets um Binnenvokale in Hiatusstellung handelt." R. Pfister, "Volks-tümliche versus quadrati," *Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft*, 15 (1959), 28. One is reminded of synizesis in the political verse.

<sup>221</sup> This principle and the exceptions are discussed *ibid.*, 26–28. The Latin word-accent is, of course, more directly subordinated than its Greek equivalent to the quantitative pattern of the word. As a result, there are likely to be more frequent coincidences in Latin than in Greek between word-accents and ictus in a quantitative line like this.

<sup>222</sup> Sacerdos, ed. H. Keil, *Grammatici Latini*, VI (Leipzig, 1857), 461.

<sup>223</sup> Porphyrio's scholia to Horace, ed. A. Halder (Innsbruck, 1894), schol. to *Epistles I*, 1, 59.

<sup>224</sup> Petronius, *Satyricon*, 58, 8.

<sup>225</sup> Odes, IV, 2, 46–47.

<sup>226</sup> O. Skutsch, "Plautus, *Bacchides* 972: a Quadratus Triumphalis," *Rivista di Filologia e di Instruzione Classica*, 98 (1970), 300–1.

dominance of the dactylic rhythm at the line-ending over the anapestic. Thus both of our metrical demands have been met. It seems to have been a popular verse medium most characteristically used in songs to an *imperator* during the most spectacular ceremony of the Roman Republic and early Empire. The difficulties for this solution arise from the historical lacuna between the last fully accepted *versus quadratus* in the first century A.D. and the first political verse in the tenth. However similar the form and function of the verse which disappears into the lacuna to those of the verse which emerges at the end, they are not adequate to sustain the argument through a gap of nine hundred years and a change of language from Latin to Greek.

There is a slender thread of evidence by which to bridge the lacuna. Before attempting to explain it, I should like to suggest reasons for its being so slight. The surviving lines of the *versus quadratus* itself are, in fact, disappointingly few.<sup>227</sup> It was an oral verse in the sense that it was improvised by the soldiers for the occasion and only written down for some external reason. No doubt the language was usually well below the level of formal literature, and the sentiments trivial. The content was usually insulting and sometimes obscene. Thus there are many more allusions to the use of apotropaic verse than there are quotations.<sup>228</sup> Its use in triumphs must have dated from much earlier than Plautus, even if one would hesitate to accept the evidence of Livy, who includes satirical verse among the acclamations and poetic eulogies in the triumphs of Cincinnatus, Cossus, and Camillus.<sup>229</sup> There is enough evidence to establish the verse as a standard part of a highly traditional ceremony during the last centuries of the Republic and the first years of the Empire. But most of the meat of that evidence was preserved by Suetonius,<sup>230</sup> who was plainly attracted by its lively vulgarity. No doubt others were repelled for the same reason. If verses from the best-documented period of Roman history depended on a Suetonius for their preservation, there should be no surprise at the paucity of later surviving evidence.

The only direct quotation of the verse after Suetonius is as full of problems as everything else connected with the *Historia Augusta*. Four puerile lines are included in the *Aurelian*.<sup>231</sup> The first three, as they survive, seem to follow no metrical rules. The fourth is more interesting: *tantum vini nemo habet quantum fudit sanguinis*. This is almost a *versus quadratus*, accurate in rhythm but less accurate in quantity.<sup>232</sup> It is reminiscent of the mediaeval *rhythmus* of this pattern, but earlier than any other example. If we turn from the fourth line back to the other three, it is possible to restore the same meter to all by adding *mille*

<sup>227</sup> Pfister, *op. cit.*, can find only nineteen certain examples. At another literary level he could have added much of the *Pervigilium Veneris*, particularly its refrain, *Cras amet qui numquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet*, which shows the archaic fourfold *quadratus* pattern.

<sup>228</sup> See M. Schanz and C. Hosius, *Geschichte der Römischen Literatur* (Munich, 1927), I, 22, for a list of testimonia.

<sup>229</sup> Livy, III, 29.5; IV, 20.2; V, 49.7.

<sup>230</sup> *Divus Julius*, 49, 51, 80; *Caligula*, 6; *Galba*, 6: 11 lines in all.

<sup>231</sup> See 6.5.

<sup>232</sup> Häbet. This line is discussed, e.g., by P. Klopsch, *Einführung in die mittellateinische Verslehre* (Darmstadt, 1972), 17, with too much trust in the authenticity of the *Historia Augusta*.

twice to the first two lines and three times to the third. The verse is already so banal that the addition makes little difference:

*Mille mille mille <mille mille> decollavimus.  
unus homo mille <mille mille> decollavimus.  
mille <mille mille> bibat qui mille <mille> occidit.*

For the first two lines, the additions have already been made by a later hand in the Palatine manuscript which is the acknowledged *codex optimus* for the text. The author apologizes for the childishness of this doggerel, and explains its inclusion by blaming his source, whom he felt obliged to follow.

These verses were presumably written before about 400, when the *Historia Augusta* seems to have reached its final form.<sup>233</sup> They were plainly included as a little coloring in the manner of Suetonius, whose influence may be felt with increasing strength on the later biographies of that work.<sup>234</sup> The difficulties come in deciding the basis on which the writer was using his invention. It is possible that this is a bookish borrowing from Suetonius, without reference to the writer's milieu, but this I think is unlikely. In the first place the verse is wrong in its quantitative pattern, and the error is exactly what would be expected in a transition to the mediaeval *rhythmus*. Further, the author differs from Suetonius in the historical purpose with which he makes the quotation. The lines are not sung by soldiers in an emperor's triumph; they are chanted for dancing by children on holidays, *militariter*—in soldier fashion. They were sung before Aurelian became Emperor, foreshadowing, as it were, his future elevation. The bookish borrowings of the *Historia Augusta* are not usually so carefully varied from their originals. I think it likely that the reference to Suetonius has here become combined with the writer's own experience. The verse-form—even, perhaps, its use in children's soldier games—is probably a reflection of the fourth century.

The remaining pieces of evidence are in Greek, not Latin, and refer to the court of Constantinople, not that of Rome. There is no need for extensive explanation of this linguistic and geographical transplantation. Of the elements of continuity between the Roman and Byzantine Empires, two of the strongest were the military and the ceremonial. In both cases the conservatism was more than formal, including even the preservation of a number of Latin words and phrases.<sup>235</sup> Triumphal verse comes precisely at the junction of these two elements. Moreover, the ideology and iconography of the Byzantine imperial ceremonies drew much of their inspiration from the Roman triumph.<sup>236</sup>

<sup>233</sup> See, e.g., the résumé of the problem in Sir Ronald Syme, *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta* (Oxford, 1968), 211–20.

<sup>234</sup> See H. W. Bird, "Suetonian Influence in the Later Lives of the *Historia Augusta*," *Hermes*, 99 (1971), 129–34.

<sup>235</sup> See, e.g., H. Mihăescu, "Les éléments latins des 'Tactica-strategica' de Maurice-Urbicius et leur écho en néo-grec," I, *RESEE*, 6 (1968), 481–98; II and III, *ibid.*, 7 (1969), 155–66, 267–80; J. Handschin, *Das Zeremonienwerk Kaiser Konstantins und die sangbare Dichtung*, Rektoratsprogramm der Universität Basel, 1940–41 (Basel, 1942), 49–50.

<sup>236</sup> See, e.g., A. Alföldi, "Die Ausgestaltung des monarchischen Zeremoniells am römischen Kaiserhofe," *RM*, 49 (1934), 1–118, esp. 93; E. H. Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae* (Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1946), 13–64.

The emperor's clothing, the insignia which he carried, the acclamations shouted to him, while they underwent constant developments, additions, and changes of emphasis, showed their direct line of descent from those of the republican *triumphator*. The apotropaic ritual of the *versus quadratus* was no longer so appropriate in a Christian empire; but there should be no surprise if the verse, and its connection with the emperor, is found to have survived in some form in court circles in Byzantium.

There is a useful parallel with the West. Kantorowicz, in his examination of the *Laudes regiae*, stresses that the tone and much of the vocabulary of the political-religious nexus of Western acclamations derives from Roman "soldiers' shouts."<sup>237</sup> The triple pattern of many of the acclamations he ascribes to three causes—rhetoric, the natural triads of doxological formulae, and the triple form found in earlier military acclaims. The last is given most emphasis in his account, and the example provided is the line about Germanicus quoted above.<sup>238</sup> Kantorowicz does not distinguish this metrical line from other acclamations in the free rhythms of the *Litaniestil*. His argument could have been given a little more depth by reference to the triple pattern inherent in the nature of the *versus quadratus*. Later, suggesting that the Greek triple litany, found in the *Book of Ceremonies* and elsewhere, may have been due to Latin Western influence, he concludes: "Taken altogether, it is more likely that the liturgical tricolon originated in the crowds in the Byzantine theater, circus, or streets, rather than in the studio of a liturgist who checked on Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*."<sup>239</sup>

The metrical evidence for a Greek form of the *versus quadratus* is nearly all included in Maas's article, "Metrische Akklamationen der Byzantiner."<sup>240</sup> Maas's own opinion of its relevance for present purposes is made plain by the last sentence of his introductory note (p. 28). "Von den 'metrischen' Akklamationen der Römer..., lauter trochaischen Tetrametern, führt keine Brücke zu den byzantinischen." If we persevere, however, in spite of this weighty warning, I think it is possible to make a case, if not for a bridge between the two forms, at least for a tunnel with occasional openings through which the course of development may be glimpsed.

By far the most important sections of Maas's article for the present argument are II and III.1. Section II consists of two parallel lines, the war cries of the demes in the struggle of November 561. They are accentual trochaic tetrameters—the *Historia Augusta* line in Greek dress. Section III.1 is more controversial. Maas seems to scan it<sup>241</sup> in accentual couplets, seven syllables

<sup>237</sup> *Op. cit.*, 24–25.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 22–25.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 28. There is a very frequent triple pattern also in modern Greek popular poetry, of which an example (from Neophytos Enkleistos) is given in note 92 *supra*. It spans two lines rather than the single line of the *versus quadratus*; the pattern is repeated in the two halves of the first line, and then lengthened to fill the whole of the second. The relative lengths of the three cola thus are the same as in the *versus quadratus*, though the actual lengths are doubled. This pattern appears, interestingly, in the imperial laments: Ševčenko, II, 34–35, and Sternbach, I, 11–12 (see note 151 *supra*).

<sup>240</sup> *BZ*, 21 (1912), 28–51.

<sup>241</sup> In the absence of an accentual schema one may only analyze the text which he prints.

plus seven in the first line, and eight plus eight in the second—though the fourth line of his text seems to have eight plus seven. The same text has been published by Krumbacher and N. G. Politis as trochaic tetrameters like those of Maas's section II.<sup>242</sup>

A choice between these alternatives depends partly on the relative weight to be given to the three chroniclers in whose work the poem survives—Johannes Antiochenus, Theophanes, and Cedrenos.<sup>243</sup> Johannes Antiochenus may be taken for the first couplet, which is all that has survived in his fragmentary work. Theophanes is presumably to be preferred for the rest; Cedrenos is much later, and may in fact only be reflecting Theophanes.<sup>244</sup> If one takes as the transmitted text Johannes Antiochenus followed by Theophanes, then three of the fourteen half-lines have to be emended to produce Maas's text,<sup>245</sup> and four to make that of Politis.<sup>246</sup> Adding one to Maas's total for the unsolved problem of line 4, we are left with a situation of equality. If Theophanes is taken throughout, Politis needs to make fewer changes than Maas.<sup>247</sup> The apparent strength of Maas's position is that he is able to select readings from Cedrenos to improve the other versions,<sup>248</sup> while Politis must make independent emendations. But Maas's eclectic inclusion of readings from two versions, one of which may derive from the other, is not a strong recommendation of the resulting text. If the metrical patterns of Maas's and Politis' texts were equally likely, it would be difficult to choose between them. Maas seems to accept this, for he includes in a note the readings of the other version, saying that they “sind vielleicht so zu schreiben.”<sup>249</sup>

It is my contention that the two patterns are not equally likely. These

<sup>242</sup> Krumbacher, 792–93; N. G. Politis (see note 145 *supra*), 639. Others disagree: e.g., E. P. Voutierides, Νεοελληνική στιχουργική (Athens, 1929), 75–76, makes the point that too many changes are needed in the text to produce this result. Besides, these lines cannot be trochaic 15-syllables, because that meter did not exist in the Byzantine period!

The following symbols are used in the reconstruction of the text (for details, see note 243 *infra*): J = Johannes Antiochenus; T = Theophanes; C = Cedrenos. At points of issue: Maas = Maas, “Metrische Akklamationen” text; Maas (n) = Maas in notes.

Εύρηκε τὴν δαμαλίδα ἀπαλήν καὶ τρυφεράν,  
καὶ ὡς τὸ καινὸν ἀλεκτόριν † οὔτως αὐτὴν † πεπήδηκε,  
καὶ ἐποίησε παιδία ὡς τὰ ἔυλοκούκουδα,  
καὶ οὐδεὶς τολμᾷ λαλῆσσαι, ἀλλ' ὅλους ἐφίμωσεν.  
5 ἄγει μου ἀγιέ *⟨μου⟩*, φοβερὲ καὶ δυνατὲ,  
δός αὐτῷ κατὰ κρανίου ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρηται,  
κάγω σοι τὸν βοῦν τὸν μέγαν προσαγάγω εἰς εὐχήν.

1–2 pr. JTC      1 Εύρηκε TC: εὗρε J // δαμαλίδα T Maas (n): δάμαλιν J Maas δαμάλην C // καὶ τρυφεράν J: om. TC      2 ἀλεκτόριν JT: ἀλεκτόριον C (et T, MSS chy) // οὔτως αὐτὴν J Maas: ταύτῃ T αὐτὴν et post πεπήδηκε transp. C. Forsitan οὔτως τὴν?      3 pr. TC ἔυλοκούκουδα T: -κώδωνα C      4 pr. T om. C      5–7 pr. TC      5 *⟨μου⟩* Maas (n): om. codd. Maas // φοβερὲ καὶ δυνατέ T: om. C  
6 ὑπεραίρηται C: -ρεται T      7 βοῦν τὸν μέγαν T Maas(n): μέγαν βοῦν C Maas.

<sup>243</sup> Johannes Antiochenus: *FHG*, V, 36; Theophanes, ed. de Boor (Leipzig, 1883–85), 282.16; Cedrenos, Bonn ed. (1838), I, 703.13.

<sup>244</sup> Maas, “Metrische Akklamationen,” 30, is not sure, and refers to the brief discussion of E. Patzig, *BZ*, 9 (1900), 207. See also K. Praechter, *Quellenkritische Studien zu Kedrenos (cod. Par. gr. 1712)*, SBBayer, Philos.-philol. und histor. Kl., 2.1 (Munich, 1897), 1–107.

<sup>245</sup> Nos. 1a, 6b, 7a.

<sup>246</sup> Nos. 1a, 2b, 5a, 6b.

<sup>247</sup> No. 1a in Theophanes fits Politis' pattern.

<sup>248</sup> Nos. 6b, 7a.

<sup>249</sup> “Metrische Akklamationen,” 34 (in App. Crit.).

lines are a satirical song against the Emperor Mauricius, sung by the δῆμοι.<sup>250</sup> They had found somebody resembling the Emperor, dressed him in a caricature of imperial costume, and sat him on a donkey. The song begins with a ribald comment on Mauricius' production of children from his young wife, and ends with a prayer to a saint to thump the Emperor on the head so that he should not get above himself. Meter, subject matter, linguistic level, and circumstances all suggest the apotropaic verses of the Roman triumph with a directness too close for coincidence. I think that there must be a connection. I suggest, therefore, that Politis' version of these lines should be accepted rather than Maas's, and that the latter's denial of a link between Roman and Byzantine rhythmical acclamations must be reconsidered.

Maas also has an interesting theory about the transmission of the group of metrical acclamations which includes those discussed above. He notes that three of the group appear within the fragmentary remains of Johannes Antiochenus; equally, the last of them dates from 610, the year in which his chronicle ends. The absence of metrical acclamations in the surviving chronicles for the period after 610 suggests to Maas that we owe the transmission of this whole group to the interests and tastes of Johannes Antiochenus.<sup>251</sup> If this is true, then this chronicler would have played the same part in the survival of the early Byzantine acclamations as Suetonius had played in the preservation of the *versus quadratus*. The patchy nature of the evidence would have had similar causes in both traditions.

I would therefore propose, with a degree of confidence which approaches conviction, that the satirical song against Mauricius is composed in the *versus quadratus* in a Greek form. I suspect that a visitor to Constantinople in the sixth century, and probably before, would have heard fifteen-syllable verses with trochaic accentuation in and around the Hippodrome, perhaps in connection with the demes. Surviving examples are in Greek, but no doubt Latin was also still in use. The subject would generally have been satirical comment about the rulers, on the Roman pattern. They would rarely have been recorded. If this is true, the historical lacuna has been reduced to little more than three centuries.

One further piece of evidence may fill the lacuna completely. Bound in with Cod. Marcianus XI 19, which contains several works of Cretan drama, there is one earlier page (fol. 338 bis) containing prophetic material. This was probably copied in the late sixteenth century as a piece of nonsense to be interpreted in the customary prophetic manner. However, under the ingenious analysis of G. Morgan, it reveals the elements of a tenth-century satirical song.<sup>251a</sup> Morgan's conclusions cannot be regarded as certain, in spite of the presence in the text of the name Theophano and a striking coincidence with the situation of 970.

<sup>250</sup> The existence of the word δῆμοι here in the text of Theophanes cannot be trusted as marking a link between the demes and this song. See Cameron, *op. cit.* (as in note 185 *supra*), 81, and the introductions to the various versions of the lines, listed by Maas, "Metrische Akklamationen," 34 (in App. Crit.).

<sup>251</sup> Maas, "Metrische Akklamationen," 29.

<sup>251a</sup> G. Morgan, "A Byzantine Satirical Song?", *BZ*, 47 (1954), 292–97.

For present purposes, the interesting feature is the meter: of the seven lines, the first four seem to be good trochaic fifteen-syllables, while the sixth is an iambic political line. The fifth is a mixture, while the seventh has been too much reconstructed to be useful for metrical analysis. If Morgan was right, the song was sung in a parade rather like that in which Mauricius was parodied. This evidence would extend the life of the satirical Greek *versus quadratus* well past the first imperial lament, that for Leo VI in 913.

But there is more than mere time separating those who mocked Mauricius from those who celebrated the memory of Leo VI. The *versus quadratus* is trochaic and usually satirical, while the early political verses are iambic and adulatory. There are, therefore, two major changes to be accounted for: the ideological shift from hostility to adulation, and the metrical shift from trochaic to iambic.

The former is easy to explain. One must remember that even in the early principate the *versus quadratus* was not uniformly satirical. I have already quoted a half-line of Horace and a line on Germanicus which are very favorable to their respective subjects. The ritual functions apart, any satirical verse would be likely to provoke imitation by the imperial propagandists. It is not uncommon in any society for authority to adopt the most effective weapons of its challengers. In fact, we know that a profound psychological change was happening to the demes during this period. Anybody who compares on the one hand the uncontrollable strength of the organizations which nearly brought down Justinian, and on the other the placid ceremonial functions which they performed under the Macedonians, will not be surprised by a parallel change in the motivation of "demotic" verse.

The metrical change, however, needs more explanation. In fact, the reader's patience must now be tried by two general metrical surveys, which will take up most of the rest of this paper. Both are of wide scope, and so both must be given only summary treatment here.

The sixth and seventh centuries mark the culmination of a slow restructuring of Greek poetry before the pressures caused by the disappearance of the quantitative divisions among Greek vowels. In all the common meters written with responsion by line rather than by strophe—hexameters, pentameters, iambic trimeters, and anacreontics—a need had long existed to add a rhythmical component to the quantitative pattern. In each case, the major rhythmic demand was for a penultimate accent at the line-ending. In the hexameter, Nonnos excluded antepenultimate stress at the line-end, and restricted final stress to special circumstances.<sup>252</sup> But George of Pisidia, at the end of the Nonnian school, had 89 penultimate stresses out of 90 surviving hexameters.<sup>253</sup> The pentameter, as seen in the datable poems of the *Greek Anthology*, seems to have demanded penultimate stress at an earlier date than the hexameter, but was never so exclusive in its requirements.<sup>254</sup> For iambs, George of Pisidia

<sup>252</sup> Maas, *Greek Metre* (as in note 3 *supra*), 15–17.

<sup>253</sup> Ed. Miller, *Manuelis Philae Carmina* (as in note 151 *supra*), II, 384–88.

<sup>254</sup> See F. Hanssen, "Ein musikalisches Accentgesetz in der quantitirenden Poesie der Griechen," *RhM*, 38 (1883), 222–33, who gives statistics for the avoidance of stress on the last syllable.

again marks a pivotal point; in his early poems, little more than half his trimeters were accented on the penultimate, while in his last poems the percentage had risen above 90.<sup>255</sup> In anacreontics, penultimate accentuation reached 78.7 percent in Gregory of Nazianzus, 70.2 percent in John of Gaza, and 97.5 percent in George Grammatikos, at the beginning of the sixth century.<sup>256</sup> In each case, a practice which had been only a tendency was now becoming a rule. Since it seems impossible to justify this accent on the grounds of metrical theory, we must ascribe it to the pressures of the audience. It is safe to assume that Byzantine readers by the seventh century expected a penultimate stress at the line-endings of their verses.

The illiterate and semiliterate citizens of the capital who filled the Hippodrome must have felt the need for new rhythmic forms much earlier than the readers of George of Pisidia. In the ecclesiastical sphere, they responded warmly to the kontakion<sup>1</sup> and the kanon, whereas in the Hippodrome, I believe they adopted the *versus quadratus*. But the latter, in spite of its rhythmical basis, could not fit easily into the pattern set by the four meters discussed above. They demanded a penultimate accent: the *versus quadratus* excluded the penultimate. Its form must have become rather unstable in the face of the universal practice of the other stichic meters of the day. There must have been a tendency to confuse the first and second halves of the line, since the accentual demands of the *versus quadratus* were the reverse of those which were becoming standard in Greek poetry.

This question must also be placed within a wider context of comparison between mediaeval developments in Latin and Greek rhythmical verse. The last comparative study was written by W. Meyer (aus Speyer) in 1885.<sup>257</sup> Meyer was master of the Latin side of the comparison, where he himself published a number of magisterial surveys which are still fundamental to the study of mediaeval Latin verse.<sup>258</sup> But Byzantine rhythms had not all been detected at that date. Meyer believed that rhythmical experiment in Greek writing was virtually restricted to hymns before the appearance of the political verse.<sup>259</sup> There have been developments in Byzantine metrics since 1885. Studies culminating in the work of Maas in 1903 for iambics and in that of Nissen in 1940 for anacreontics<sup>260</sup> have revolutionized critical approaches toward the two most frequent meters of Middle Byzantine poetry. They had been regarded as quantitatively based, but rather inaccurately written. It is now known that they had developed, long before the date of the earliest surviving political verse, a rhythmical pattern with characteristics which may only be described in rhythmical terms. I would like to suggest that the time has come for another major comparison between the rhythmical forms of the two languages. What-

<sup>255</sup> P. Maas, "Der byzantinische Zwölfsilber," *BZ*, 12 (1903), 289–90.

<sup>256</sup> T. Nissen, *Die byzantinischen Anakreonten*, SBBayer, Phil.-hist. Kl., 3 (Munich, 1940), 20–21.

<sup>257</sup> *Anfang und Ursprung der lateinischen und griechischen rythmischen Dichtung*, AbhMün, Philos.-philol. und histor. Kl., 17.2 (Munich, 1885).

<sup>258</sup> Most of them available in his *Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur mittellateinischen Rhythmisik*, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1905–36).

<sup>259</sup> *Anfang und Ursprung*, 316–26.

<sup>260</sup> See notes 255 and 256 *supra*.

ever their similarities and differences in the classical period, whatever their respective courses of development from quantitative to rhythmical poetics, the results are remarkably similar. Here I can only suggest the outcome which such a study might reach.

The forms of the mediaeval Latin *rhythmus* are apparently much more diverse than those of Byzantine rhythmical poetry. The index “vers rythmiques” to D. Norberg’s introduction to the subject<sup>261</sup> has entries for verses from one syllable to eighteen, and some syllable numbers have entries for several different metrical patterns, rising to eleven for verses of twelve syllables. Beside this complexity, the three Byzantine rhythms look absurdly few. But if attention is restricted to Latin verse from before the end of the Carolingian period, and account is taken of numbers, a more uniform picture emerges. Three patterns predominate: I—fifteen syllables, eight with antepenultimate accent before the caesura followed by seven with antepenultimate accentuation (8p + 7pp);<sup>262</sup> II—twelve syllables, 5p + 7pp; III—8pp undivided.

The frequency of these rhythms may be demonstrated from W. Meyer’s list of rhythmical patterns,<sup>263</sup> and from the *index metricus* for the relevant volume of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*.<sup>264</sup> For comparative purposes, I include below figures for the fourth most common rhythm, IV—8p undivided, and the most frequent rhythm in each case apart from those already mentioned:

|                | I  | II | III | IV | Other |
|----------------|----|----|-----|----|-------|
| Meyer          | 48 | 29 | 30  | 8  | 4     |
| Strecker (MGH) | 66 | 29 | 14  | 6  | 4     |

With their different time limits and standards of inclusion, these figures show the special position of the three most frequent rhythms.

Let us put them opposite the three Byzantine rhythms, which for the sake of comparison will be expressed in Norberg’s notation:<sup>265</sup>

|             | Latin                            | Greek                            |
|-------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| I 8p & 7pp  | Political verse                  | 8pp/f & 7p                       |
| II 5p & 7pp | 12-syllable<br>(Iambic trimeter) | 5f & 7p<br>(less often 7pp & 5p) |
| III 8pp     | 8-syllable (Anacreontic)         | 8p                               |

<sup>261</sup> *Introduction à l’étude de la versification Latine médiévale*, Studia Latina Stockholmensia, 5 (Stockholm, 1958), 213–15.

<sup>262</sup> There are two notations in regular use to indicate the accentual patterns of the ends of Latin rhythmical lines: the more common is Meyer’s: 8— for an octosyllable with an antepenultimate accentuation (throwing a subsidiary accent on the final) and 8— for a penultimate. For comparison with Greek I prefer Norberg’s 8pp (antepenultimate) and 8p (penultimate), to which I would add 8f (final) to describe the Greek oxytone.

<sup>263</sup> *Der Ludus de Antichristo und Bemerkungen über die lateinischen Rythmen des XII. Jahrhunderts*, SBMün, Philos.-philol. und histor. Kl., 1 (Munich, 1882), 79–106.

<sup>264</sup> MGH, *Poetae*, vol. IV, fasc. II and III, ed. K. Strecker (Berlin, 1923), Index 1162–63, s.v. *Carmina rhythrica*.

<sup>265</sup> The Greek rhythms may best be found in F. Dölger, *Die byzantinische Dichtung in der Reinsprache* (Berlin, 1948), 40–41, or Koder, *Hymns* (as in note 11 *supra*), 82–93.

They seem uncannily similar. The alternative final accentuation in Greek arises from the nature of that language, which permits final accents on poly-syllabic words while Latin does not. Apart from this, and the alternative Greek division of the twelve-syllable, the two sets of forms are perfect mirror images. First- and second-half accentuations are reversed.

There are further parallels in the handling of the rest of the line. The situation in each language seems to be balanced at the same point: are the syllables before the last two or three in each metrical unit to be regarded as free, or is it desirable to formulate rules over their accentuation?

Meyer comes down firmly against rules. "Ich habe stets als Ergebnis meiner Untersuchungen behauptet: die Zeilen der lateinischen und griechischen rhythmischen Dichtung sind Prosa mit einer bestimmten Schlusskadenz."<sup>266</sup> Planudes, with his "two stress-accents, one at the beginning and one at the end,"<sup>267</sup> would share this point of view. Against these one may set Norberg: "L'idée que les syllabes avant les cadences finales pouvaient avoir un rythme quelconque se heurte à plusieurs faits et doit être révisée,"<sup>268</sup> and Koder's careful statement of rules for the organization of the early syllables in both halves of the political line.<sup>269</sup> In the study of that verse, battle had been joined early on this point; C. L. Struve suggested a system of rules in 1828,<sup>270</sup> which were strongly attacked by Henrichsen in 1838.<sup>271</sup> Both in Latin and in Greek the problem seems largely a question of terminology—whether a given situation is best described as governed by rules to which there are many exceptions, or as subject to a freedom of choice which is usually decided in the same way. The point here is that students of both Latin and Greek mediaeval rhythms find themselves in the same dilemma.

There seems to be too much correspondence here in both pattern and approach to permit the hypothesis of coincidence from separate but parallel developments. I believe that a careful examination of both traditions will bring the conclusion that there has been influence from one on the other. Granted the greater ease of transfer from quantitative to rhythmic verse-patterns in Latin than in Greek,<sup>272</sup> and the lack of a suitable Greek origin for the fifteen-syllable form, I would propose that the influence has passed from Latin to Greek.

Thus, as we return at last to the metrical problem from which these two excursions began, we have two wider perspectives against which to view the development of the *versus quadratus* into political verse. In the sixth and seventh centuries, there was increasing emphasis in all the secular meters of Byzantium on the need for a penultimate accent at the line-end—a demand

<sup>266</sup> *Gesammelte Abhandlungen* (as in note 258 *supra*), III, 12.

<sup>267</sup> See p. 144 *supra*.

<sup>268</sup> *Op. cit.*, 90–91.

<sup>269</sup> *Hymns*, 88–92.

<sup>270</sup> *Über den politischen Vers der Mittelgriechen* (Hildesheim, 1828).

<sup>271</sup> *Op. cit.* (as in note 7 *supra*).

<sup>272</sup> This phrase has been left deliberately vague to avoid making a controversial point which could not be supported here. It means only that there is more frequent coincidence between metrical ictus and word-accent in Latin poetry than in Greek—the result of the greater Latin rigidity in the placing of the word-accent.

not fulfilled by the *versus quadratus*. Furthermore, there must be a suspicion that the other two rhythmical forms of Byzantium, those of eight and twelve syllables respectively, were strongly influenced by Latin patterns in such a way as to leave the same reversal of the meter which I am suggesting for the political verse.

We must use these preconceptions in the analysis of the rest of Maas's rhythmical acclamations, particularly his long section IX from the *Book of Ceremonies*.<sup>273</sup> These songs have made the ideological transition from satire to flattery. Leaving aside the political verse spring song, we must examine eleven other brief poems. Maas divides them into two groups: 2–4 are "Alternierende proparoxytonische Acht- und Siebensilber, distichisch." For 5–12 his description is "Paroxytonischer Achtsilber, distichisch; jedes Gedicht besteht aus acht auch ihrerseits distichisch gegliederten Langzeilen. Am Halbzeilenschluss ist auch proparoxytonischer Schlussakzent gestattet." Neither of these programs is fulfilled with any consistency or precision. In the first case, eight- and seven-syllable half-lines follow each other in a generally alternate pattern, with occasional faults which blur the distinctions between the first and second halves of the line. All half-lines have proparoxytone endings. The second group of songs at first sight seems to consist of penultimately accented stanzas each of four eight-syllable lines. But there are occasional antepenultimate endings to remind the listener that the lines are fundamentally longer and made up of two disparate parts. Proparoxytone eight-syllable lines, usually in distichs, are often found in Hippodrome satire, as, for example, Maas's sections IV.2; V; VII.1–2.

It is difficult to think of the poems of section IX as the successful completion of a carefully conceived metrical plan. It is easy, though of course dangerous, to see them as a mishandling of the Latinate trochaic fifteen-syllable; on that assumption, one could say that the first group has retained the antepenultimate accentuation of the second half of the Latin line, but extended it, with an excess of zeal, to the first half, where it is found in political verse. Alternation of eight- and seven-syllable elements has also generally been preserved. This is a likely stage in a development from the *versus quadratus* into the political line. The second group, while it may have had the same metrical origin, has almost completed a transformation into "anacreontic" octosyllables. Whether the songs were written in this form, or changed in transmission, I do not know.

As we have seen, several features of this hypothetical course of development are still to be found in early examples of the developed political verse.<sup>274</sup> The imperial laments have only antepenultimate accents at the end of the first half

<sup>273</sup> It is worth noting that several songs are mentioned in the *Book of Ceremonies* but never quoted. Some, to judge from name or function, might have been of interest here: θριαμβευτάλιον: 498.9; βασιλίκιος: 577.10; 583.16, 21; 585.14; 597.6; 600.13, 15, 16; 601.13; 602.8; 604.1, 5 (these are particularly connected with the Brumalia, the most democratic of Roman festivals); αύγουστικά: 287.25; 291.22; λαμπτοί chanted sometimes, perhaps always, in Latin by the μαῖστρω and νοτάριος of each deme, walking close behind the imperial party from the Great Palace to Hagia Sophia and back, on certain festivals: 33.22; 73.21; 98.8; 111.6; 149.24–150.2; 163.23; 181.25. See Handschin, *Zeremonienwerk* (as in note 235 *supra*), 50–54.

<sup>274</sup> See pp. 167, 169, 183 *supra*.

of the line, excluding the final accentuation which was to be popular later. Equally, their alternate sequence of eight- and seven-syllable half-lines is often disturbed by a refrain. Symeon the New Theologian frequently uses lines of eight plus eight or seven plus seven syllables, bearing witness to the fact that the meter had not settled even by the end of the tenth century. The Grotta-ferrata version of *Digenis Akritas* has a high percentage of lines which begin with a trochaic accentual pattern.

This proposal on the problem of the origin of this verse is not offered as a certain solution. The nature of the surviving evidence will always impose an attitude of skepticism toward any such theories. But I feel that the explanation suggested here has a better chance of breaking through that skepticism than any other that I have considered.

The last point must be a warning which has justly become a cliché in writing on Byzantine subjects. This paper has suggested a course of metrical evolution which took place in and around the Hippodrome in Constantinople. But it must be remembered that if a similar process were occurring anywhere in the Empire outside the capital, it is most unlikely that any record would have survived. There is a danger that the account given here is partial, concentrating on developments in the city surrounding the Emperor, when significant progress was being made elsewhere. It is strange, for example, that the spring song of the *Book of Ceremonies* has the air of a rural folk song, though it is probably the oldest surviving political verse and it is the only example of the meter known certainly to have been sung in the Hippodrome in the tenth century. In a more general way, there seems to be no other tradition of oral poetry and folk song whose meter came into existence for a restricted purpose within an urban environment.

Can it be that the Latin trochaic meter found more immediate acceptance away from the capital, where it could have been assimilated more quickly to Greek iambics, outside the formal atmosphere of the court? One may speculate about the nature of such provincial verse; to judge from the function of the Latin form, one might suggest Greek songs made by soldiers about their leaders. Initially, they would probably have been satirical. But in an unlettered military society, there could be favorable circumstances for the growth of a tradition of epic songs. The leaders would then become heroes, with the super-human properties ascribed to the successful warrior of every age. A suitable area for the genesis of such a genre would be a region of constant military activity far from Constantinople, where Roman military tradition would die hard but where there would be no formal archaism, no pressure for the preservation of the unfashionable trochaic form of the Latin verse. The result would not be very different from the Akritic group of heroic songs, as revealed in the epic romance of *Digenis Akritas* and in the Akritic songs collected from Greeks in the last two centuries. If our information about life on the Eastern border were as complete as that for the capital, the soldiers of the frontier themes would probably be coupled with the poets of the demes as the innovators of Demotic Greek verse.